



THE BEST OF THE

Wrestler

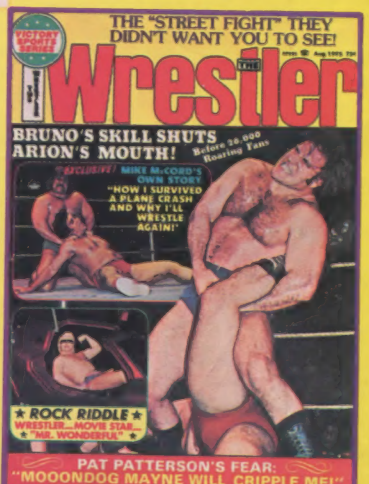
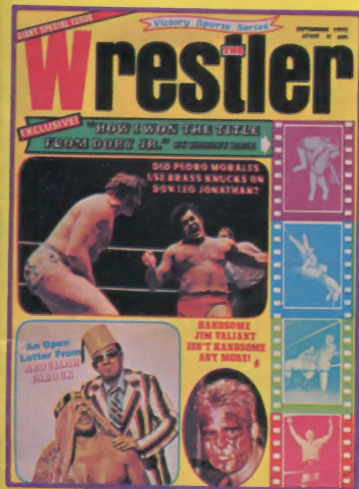
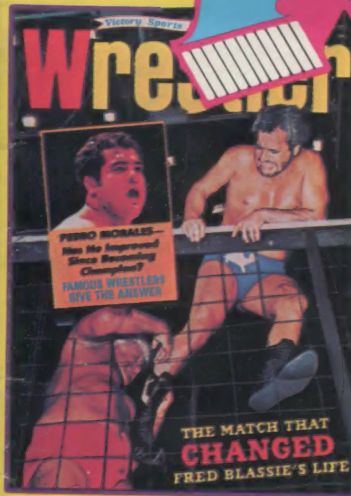
FALL 1976

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THE MOST DRAMATIC MOMENTS
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A TREASURY OF THE BEST STORIES AND
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- WRESTLING'S 10 MOST DANGEROUS MEN ●
- HOW SUPERSTAR GRAHAM OUTSMARTED BILLY ROBINSON ●
- HARLEY RACE WINS THE NWA CHAMPIONSHIP ●
- WHY SHEIK REFUSED TO THROW FIRE AT BOBO BRAZIL ●
- IS DORY JR. ALL WASHED UP? ●
- THE MAN WHO'S HAPPY TO BE AN EX-CHAMPION ●
- ANTONIO INOKI WINS THE NWF TITLE ●
- THE NIGHT EDOUARD CARPENTIER LOST HIS TRUNKS ●
- ERNIE LADD GRILLED ON THE HOTSEAT ●



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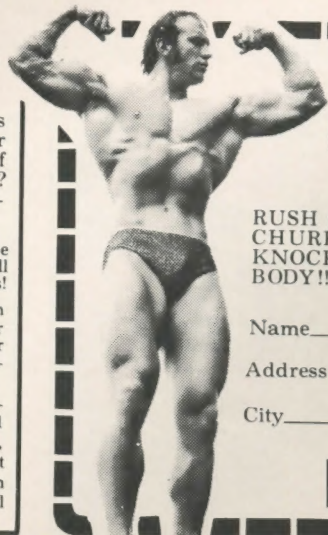
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THE BEST OF THE **Wrestler**

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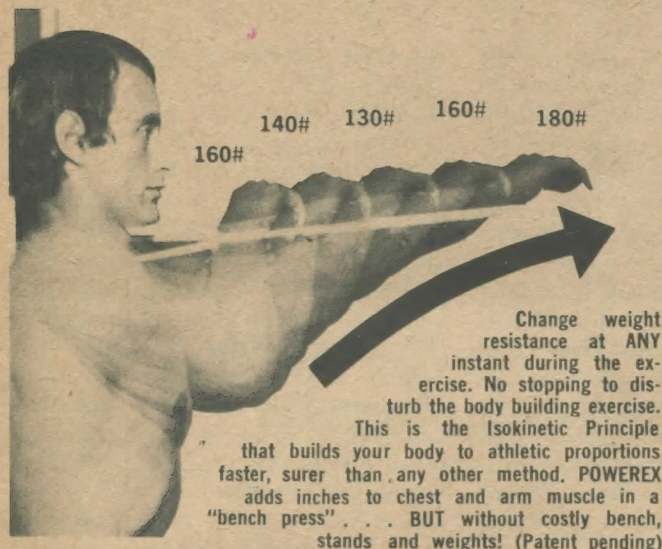
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ISOKINETICS Will Build Your Muscles Faster...or you get your money right back!



Change weight resistance at ANY instant during the exercise. No stopping to disturb the body building exercise. This is the Isokinetic Principle that builds your body to athletic proportions faster, surer than any other method. POWEREX adds inches to chest and arm muscle in a "bench press" . . . BUT without costly bench stands and weights! (Patent pending)

HERE'S RESULTS FAST — SURE — PROOF

A group of researchers stated that all published research matching isokinetics with weight lifting and isometrics showed that isokinetics is greatly superior for muscle building.

● "After four weeks of using the exerciser, my strength has doubled thanks to you." —J. Castillo, AK.

● "I'm beginning to look like I did when I got out of the Marine Corps." —Don C., PA.

● "In just 6 weeks, I put 2" on my arms, 3" on my chest, 2" on my thighs, and gained 22 lbs." —N.D.

● "In complete honesty, I think it is a great exercise program . . . the best one on the market!!!!" —Dave Fuss, IL.

● "You just aren't another rip-off company. You back what you say." —T. Roeklein, WI.

● "I've averaged from 2-3" on my legs, arms, and chest — I'm glad that I did invest the money." —Richard Oxer, MT.

● "Enclosed is my money order (for a new Powerex). I know how good it is. I had one and I lost it. I am in several sports and cannot win without Powerex. It is the greatest!" —G. Scott, Canada.

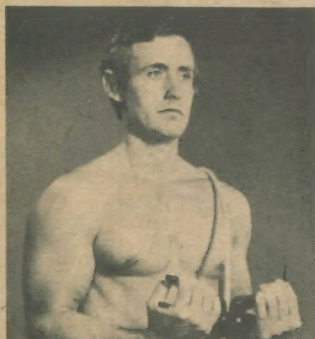
● "Arms increased 2½", chest 3", decreased waist 2", and gained 20 lbs. — look and feel a lot better!" —Joseph Moreno, CA.

● "I used to be a singles man — this season I was a home run hitter, and I credit Powerex with this." —T. J., AL.

● "The results are just FANTASTIC!" —Richard Lynn, MN.

ILLUSTRATED WALL CHART COURSES

POWEREX is safe, and light — under two pounds. POWEREX is compact, quick and easy to use, anytime, anywhere. At no extra cost, you also get a big 20 x 28-inch wall chart with illustrations and instructions. Several courses are described . . . for increased strength, bigger muscles, or turning fat into muscle. One course takes only 15 minutes a week.



THIS IS OUR UNCONDITIONAL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

POWEREX must bring you results. Try it for 14 days. If you are not satisfied with your POWEREX for any reason whatsoever just send it back for an immediate full refund of your money. No questions . . . no delays! We want you to be satisfied! AND in addition, we guarantee all parts and workmanship for one full year from date of purchase!

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- 166% Better Than Weights
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Isokinetics is now proved superior to weight training for building your strength, body and explosive power . . . faster, more effectively than any other method.

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Isokinetics 47.2%
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Isometrics 12.1%

During each Isokinetic exercise, you continually change the "weight" to the amount that your muscles need for fastest maximum development . . . without stopping. Until recently the only Isokinetic exercisers available were complicated machines costing from \$120 to over \$4000. But NOW, A NEW invention, amazing in its beautiful simplicity, puts Isokinetic muscle building within your reach for only a few dollars.

POWEREX — ISOKINETICS

The invention is POWEREX — an Isokinetic exerciser designed to give you the ultimate benefits of muscle strength, and explosive power faster than ever. And, as you know, with this comes the added benefits of confidence, and the outgoing personality that enables you to get along well with others of both sexes.

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INTRODUCTION

THE BEST OF THE WRESTLER

ONCE AGAIN, wrestling fans, presented within the pages of one magazine is a collection of the greatest wrestling stories ever published—THE BEST OF THE WRESTLER. In this super special issue we have chosen 12 of the most popular stories from the world's most popular wrestling magazine—*The Wrestler*.

"I'm Glad I Lost My Title," which first appeared in the February 1968 issue of *The Wrestler*, concerns Lou Thesz, former six time NWA champion, after he lost his belt for the last time. Thesz' shocking confession makes good reading indeed.

Another article from 1968, this time from the December issue, is, "Stand Still, Dammit! That Kid Wants To

Take Your Picture!" This words and photo story featured Hans Schmidt and Edouard Carpentier, with the "Flying Frenchman" caught in a very embarrassing situation.

Everyone knows about the great friendship between Bruno Sammartino and Gorilla Monsoon. However, not many fans are aware how their friendship started. "Bruno And The Gorilla Are Friends—But How Long Will It Last?" first published in July 1970, reveals the startling reasons why Bruno and Monsoon changed from deadly enemies to the best of friends.

Former WWWF champion Pedro Morales is a man of great pride. When he held the title he defended it with dignity and honor. Our exclusive article, "When Pedro Morales Vowed

To Quit Wrestling," shows to what lengths Pedro went to keep the WWWF title an honorable possession.

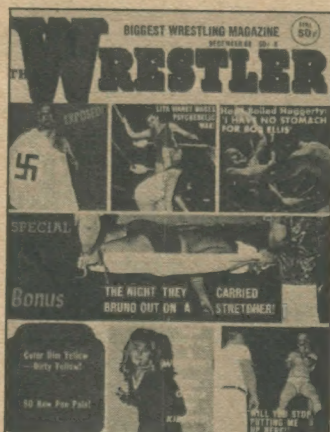
"The Hotseat," which is now a regular feature in our sister wrestling publication, *Inside Wrestling*, got its start of the January 1973 issue of *The Wrestler*. Reprinted here is that very first "Hotseat," with Big Cat Ernie Ladd as the subject.

A landmark story, published in March 1973, was "The 10 Most Dangerous Men In Wrestling by Dr. Manfred E. Wilson." In this award-winning study by Dr. Wilson, wrestling's roughest rulebreakers are listed. Incidentally, soon after this story was printed, Bruiser, who was one of the 10 about whom Dr. Wilson

(Continued on page 50)



FEBRUARY 1968



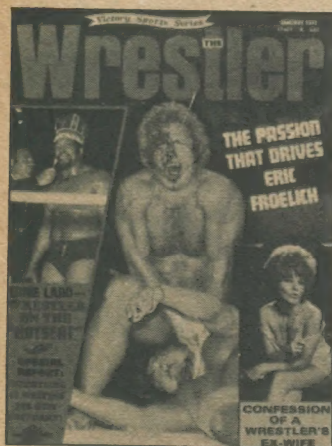
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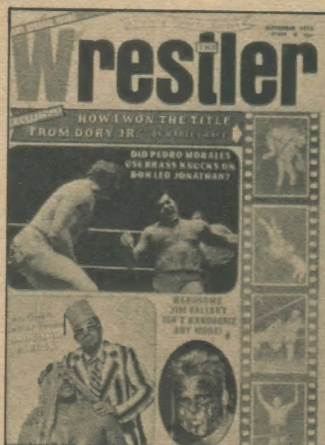
JUNE 1972



JANUARY 1973



MARCH 1973



SEPTEMBER 1973



OCTOBER 1973

Imagine being such a great lover women can see it in your eyes!

Here is a book that can turn you into such an exciting lover women will sense your sexual powers the instant you walk into a room. The book is called **HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A SINGLE GIRL**. And its guaranteed to turn you into the kind of lover women just can't wait to go to bed with!

OVER 160 LUSCIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS!

HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A SINGLE GIRL contains over 160 luscious photos that show you — step by exciting step — how to turn on a woman. In these incredibly frank pictures you'll see an expert lover touching, holding, and seducing an unbelievably sexy-looking woman. Each of the more than 60 chapters tells you exactly what arouses a girl. You'll learn — in their own words! — women's most secret pleasures, the things they love so much from a man they can't resist him. In a single reading you can become the kind of man a woman recognizes on the street as a great lover. These are just a few

of the fabulous techniques you'll learn and master:

- Where to touch a girl first • how to make a woman "let herself go" • The aphrodisiac touch
- The positions girls like best • How to get a girl out of her clothes • What's special about a single girl • How to excite a girl with just words • How to give a woman multiple orgasms • How to caress her breast so she'll want desperately to sleep with you • How to arouse her with a single kiss • How to help her fantasize having sex with you • And hundreds of other fantastic techniques, most of them illustrated with exciting photographs!

Most guys think you have to be good-looking or rich to attract lots of women. Not true! **HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A SINGLE GIRL** will teach you overnight how to thrill women so intensely they'll see it in your eyes, recognize it in your walk. After you've read this book . . . and looked at the pictures . . . women will see you in a whole new, exciting way. Don't waste another day of your life. Order **HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A SINGLE GIRL** today! (To order see coupon below.)

How To Make Love To A Single Girl



This amazing new record album shows you how to pick up girls Automatically!

Imagine if you could walk up to any beautiful girl who caught your eye — repeat a few simple words to her you heard on a record album — and within seconds have her eating out of the palm of your hand.

Well, now you can! Because now there's a fantastic new record album (or cassette) called **PICKING UP GIRLS MADE EASY**. **PICKING UP GIRLS MADE EASY** will teach you a whole new system for picking up girls — a system that is so complete . . . and so absolutely foolproof . . . you'll soon be picking up girls automatically!!!

THE PICK UP SYSTEM NO GIRLS CAN RESIST!

This 40 minute album has eight actual recorded pick-up scenes to learn from. You'll hear exactly how to pick up a busy college girl in a library, a tall pretty blond on the street, a dark-haired sexy swinger in a single's bar. Each pick-up is introduced by Eric Weber, the famous author of **HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS**! Eric explains exactly how and what to say for each different kind of pick up.

You'll listen in as a guy just like yourself successfully picks up a gorgeous girl in a string bikini. You'll actually hear the voices of the people involved: the guy, as he begins to

work his magic . . . and the girl, as she falls willing victim to his charm. Absolutely everything is spelled out for you, from attention-getting opening lines . . . through seductive, irresistible talk that gets a girl to really open up to you . . . to foolproof closing lines that get you her telephone number, a date, and sometimes even her body right then and there. Unbelievable? You won't think so when you suddenly find yourself gliding down the street with a beautiful golden stranger on your arm.

PICKING UP GIRLS CAN BE AS EASY AS OPENING A BEER!

This amazing new pick up system is so easy to master, you can learn it without even trying. *Automatically* you will be transformed into an expert picker upper and seducer. And the more you listen to the album, the better you'll get. It's INCREDIBLE! Here are just a few techniques you will soon be an expert at:

- How to pick up an art-student in a museum • How to pick up girls in department stores • How to be witty (girls are easy to pick up once you've got them laughing) • How to get a pretty stranger at the beach to put suntan oil on you • How to get a girl out of a singles bar and into your apartment in less than an hour • How to tell when a girl wants to make it just by the sound of her voice.

PICKING UP GIRLS MADE EASY!



The day your album arrives will be a fantastic experience. Sit down, pour yourself a glass of wine, and put **PICKING UP GIRLS MADE EASY** on your record player. Your life won't be the same again! What you'll hear is so exciting and fool-proof that the next time you spot a chick you'll pick her up without even thinking. After just one hearing you'll have the style and confidence of a master. So send for **PICKING UP GIRLS MADE EASY** today and watch out! (To order see coupon below.)

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by Eric Weber



Featuring interviews
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Pick up girls anywhere! In bars, buses, trains, even on the street! It's easier than you ever dreamed possible. **HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS** will show you, more than 100 surefire techniques, including:

- How to make shyness work for you • Why a man doesn't have to be good-looking • Why girls get horny • 50 great opening lines • World's greatest pick-up technique • How to get women to pick you up • How to succeed in singles' bars.

HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS contains in-depth interviews with 25 beautiful girls. They tell you exactly what it takes to pick them up. Send for **HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS** today and pick up any girl you want. **HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS** costs only \$8.95. It makes picking up girls as easy as tying your shoes!

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- ☐ **HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS**, only \$8.95 plus \$1.00 postage & handling.
- ☐ Both books only \$19.95 plus \$1.00 postage & handling.

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- ☐ Record or ☐ cassette and **HOW TO PICK UP GIRLS** only \$16.95 plus \$1.00 postage & handling.
- ☐ Record or ☐ cassette and **HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A SINGLE GIRL** only \$20.95 plus \$1.00 postage & handling.

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IT'S DANGEROUS TO BE FRIENDS WITH VICTOR RIVERA



Raul Reyes is proud to consider Victor Rivera his friend. But after finding out what happens to friends of Victor, perhaps he should think the whole thing over

NO FRIEND OF Victor Rivera is a friend of John Tolos. And if you're not a friend of John Tolos, you've got to expect to pay the price.

Tolos has decided to extend his feud with Victor Rivera to anyone who has ever befriended Rivera, or doesn't actively hate Victor.

"Rivera's friends are my enemies!" John declared recently. "They either actively participated in or approved of Rivera's betrayal of me. I want to avenge their betrayal as much as I want to avenge Rivera's betrayal. This is a warning and a promise—any friend of Rivera's had better be prepared to bleed!"

The first man to be the third party victim of the feud was Rivera's good friend, Raul Reyes. Reyes was aware of Tolos' threat and talked about it before the match.

"That Tolos says Victor betrayed him is ridiculous!" Reyes said angrily. "It was John who pretended to



Raul Reyes (above) and every one of Victor Rivera's friends are being brutally beaten by John Tolos.

be friends only to attack Victor when his guard was down. Of course, in John's twisted logic, if he sneak attacks, then it's Victor who does the betraying.

"As for being worried about his threats, I'm a professional. I wrestle who I have to. I do my best no matter who's against me or what he says. If Tolos wants to be unprofessional, let him lower his own standards. I don't have to get down to his level."

In the beginning of the match, it looked like Reyes would batter Tolos into submission rather than the other way around. John was victimized by headlocks, spins and flips. Most fans thought Tolos had given up hope for revenge and was trying to escape with his life.

However, it's unwise to underestimate the skill or hatred of John Tolos. When it looked like it was all over but the pin, John smashed his fist

(Continued on page 10)

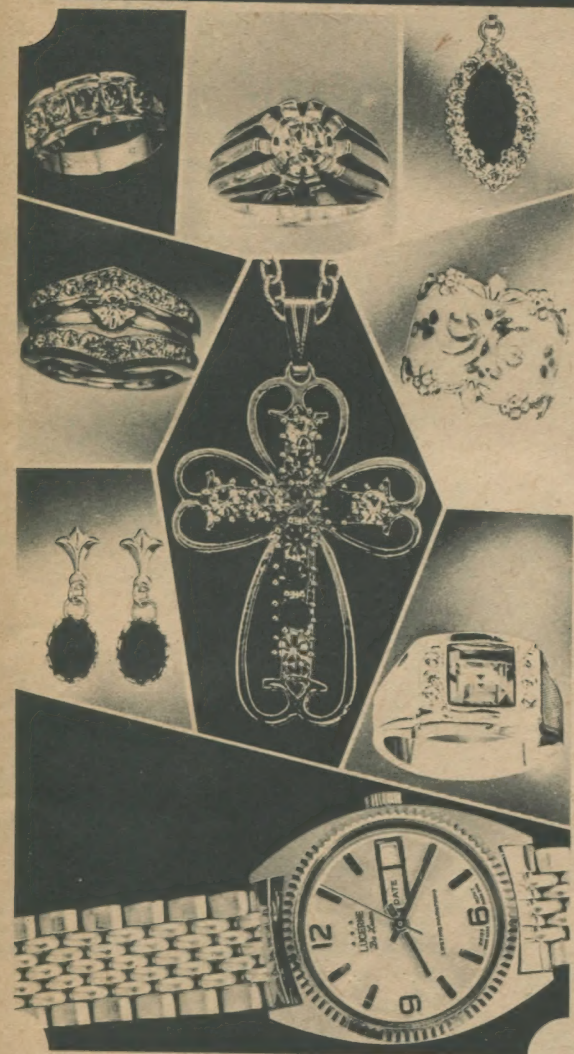
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VICTOR RIVERA

(Continued from Page 8)

brutally into Raul's face. Raul was sent reeling back. Tolos took advantage of the situation.

His fists kept hammering at Reyes until Raul slumped to the canvas. John then made him the victim of a crushing flying kneedrop. The pain was so intense that Raul mercifully became unconscious.

Tolos, still enraged, lifted the limp form high over his head and hurled Raul out of the ring and sent him crashing into the seats. It is a miracle that Raul's back wasn't broken.

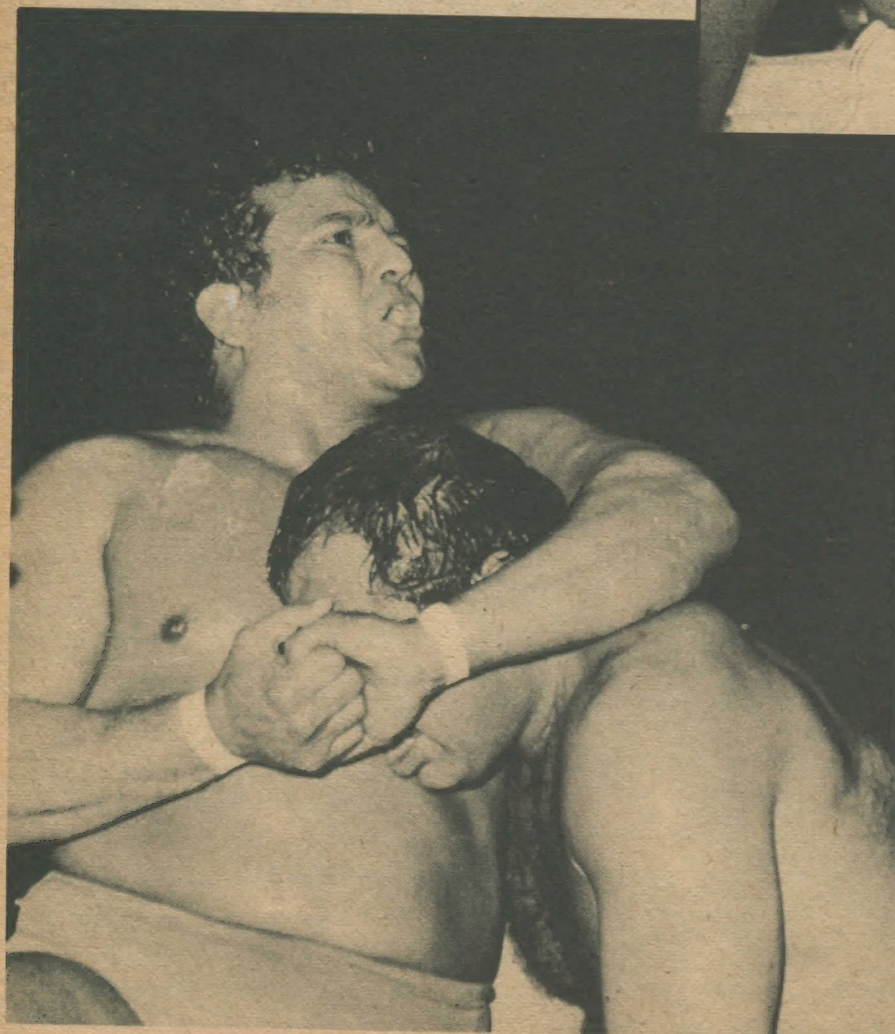
The match was over and Raul was carried back to the dressing room. When he came to, he was outraged.

"I want to wrestle him again!" he told the crowd of friends. "I want to smash him into a bloody pulp!"

John was very agreeable to another match and it was soon arranged. Raul went in looking for blood. And that's what he got, except it was his own.

Victor Rivera and John Tolos (right) beat each other to a bloody pulp. Reyes is in charge (below) but only for the moment.

"Rivera's friends are all as bad as Rivera himself," Tolos declared. "I will make it my point to rub all of his friends and him out of wrestling. I'm doing it for the good of the sport."



Raul began the match by grabbing Tolos' arm and trying to smash him into the turnbuckle. But it was not to be. Just before the turnbuckle, Tolos fell to his knees and Reyes' momentum sent Raul into the turnbuckle.

The collision opened an ugly gash across Reyes' forehead and blood began to pour out of the wound. Seeing the damage, Tolos waded in.

Devastating punches, kicks, and holds followed one another mercilessly. Reyes struggled on valiantly for many minutes after the horrified crowd began begging the referee to stop the match. The only person enjoying the slaughter was John Tolos.

Finally, the referee halted the proceedings. When Raul heard it was officially over, he fell to the mat and groaned in agony. Bloody and bruised, Raul Reyes was carried back to the dressing room.

"And let this be a warning!" Tolos screamed through an evil smile. "Friends of Victor Rivera will have to pay for that shame. And pay with their blood. So says John Tolos, the Golden Greek!" □

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WHY THE SHEIK SPARED BOBO BRAZIL FROM FLAMING AGONY

PHOTOS BY DAVE BRYZYNSKI



The Sheik is bleeding like a fountain and choking on the ring ropes as Bobo Brazil applies pressure and increases the pain (above). Punishing The Sheik this badly is equal to daring him to throw fire.

The Sheik was in trouble. Bad trouble. He could have been seriously injured by Bobo Brazil. Yet the Arab maniac refused to throw fire as he often does. And everyone was asking the same question. Why?

THE FANS IN the packed arena held their breaths. The Sheik was being slashed to ribbons by Bobo Brazil, who was using Sheik's own foreign object to do the job.

The features of Sheik's face were obscured by blood. Everyone knew it was only moments before The Sheik would use the most horrible weapon in his sadistic arsenal—fire!

The fans waited as Brazil tore away skin, punched ruthlessly, and battered his opponent around. The fans waited as Sheik slowly sank into unconsciousness.

Everyone was still waiting when they filed out of the arena. The question on their lips was, "Why didn't Sheik throw fire?"

Just as puzzled as the fans was Bobo Brazil. After the match he

sat in the dressing room and discussed Sheik's failure to wound him with flames.

"First off, we can dismiss the possibility he's grown to like me!" Bobo said with an amused grin. "I can't remember how long I've hated him and there's no reason to believe he's suddenly developed a soft spot in his heart for me. In fact, there's no reason to believe he has a heart! We've got to assume he still hates me. Yet, he didn't throw fire.

"So where do we look from here? I might have hit him too hard and too fast. He might have been finished before he knew what happened to him."

Bobo thought about it for a moment and continued, "Who am I kidding? I've seen that guy throw fire when a normal man couldn't



Above: Bobo experiences the brutal torture of Sheik's camel clutch. Left: Bobo traps Sheik in an abdominal stretch, which has The Sheik biting his own hand in agony. Below: Brazil desperately tries to get free of Sheik's crippling arm lock.

remain conscious. I'm a powerful man but this is too important to let my ego interfere. He had enough strength to throw it if he wanted. So why did he spare me?"

Bobo's question was answered with silence. The assembled wrestlers searched each other's faces, hoping someone would have the solution. There was one solution nobody mentioned because it was too good to be true. It was Bobo who finally said the unthinkable.

"He can't do it anymore," Bobo whispered quietly, and at the sound of the words the men's faces broke into huge smiles. Bobo's voice rose happily as he said, "He can't do it anymore! Sheik can't throw fire!"

"He can't throw fire anymore!" someone else took up and the room became filled with the men's laugh-

ter, sounding like battle-weary soldiers who hear the news of an armistice.

The laughter died the next time Sheik wrestled. His opponent had to be carried from the ring on a stretcher. His screams of agony made each fan give an involuntary shudder. The savage sneer on Sheik's face as his fire-scarred victim was carried to a waiting ambulance showed everyone he still was as vicious as ever. And his ability to throw fire was unquestioned.

So the wrestlers' happiness over Sheik's inability to throw fire was an empty hope. The question remains, therefore, as to why Bobo Brazil wasn't victimized by the flames.

Bobo was there the night The
(Continued on page 52)



NOW JAPAN OWNS THE N.W.F. TITLE!



ANTONIO INOKI HAS brought the N.W.F. heavy-weight wrestling championship to Japan:

In a wild, brutal match he won the title from Johnny Powers. The match took place in Tokyo and the capacity crowd went wild when Powers lost the third fall because of one of the worst breaks any wrestler has ever experienced.

The match began with both wrestlers cautiously studying his opponent, looking for advantages that had not shown up in the films they had been studying for weeks. Both wrestlers respected the other's great talent and were taking no chances.

It took almost a half hour before the first fall was over. Inoki trapped Johnny in an abdominal stretch and Powers was down by one fall.

But Powers is a great competitor and came back quickly. In less than half the time it took Inoki to win the first fall, Powers had won the second. Inoki was stunned by Powers'

A happy Inoki waves to fans after winning the N.W.F. title from Johnny Powers in Japan. Top of page: Inoki's abdominal stretch makes Johnny's eyes bug out as Inoki wins the first big fall.

famous leg hold, the Powerlock. Inoki's struggles didn't help him escape, but they did injure the Japanese superstar. It looked like Powers would easily defeat Inoki in short order to win the third fall and retain his title.

When the bell rang for the third fall, Powers came charging out. Almost immediately, he had Inoki writhing in agony, again the victim of the Powerlock. It looked like it would be over shortly. And then it happened.

Inoki was squirming near the corner and Powers was moved slightly. Johnny then tried to get more strength and snapped his head back. His head smacked into the second ring turnbuckle.

It was a solid shot and it weakened Powers. Inoki was able to escape. Then Inoki, taking advantage of the situation, took the semi-conscious Powers and enveloped him in an elaborate abdominal stretch called the Cobra Twist. By the time Johnny could recover his strength, it was all over. Antonio Inoki was the N.W.F. heavyweight wrestling champion!

After the match, a dejected Johnny Powers said, "Well, at least I deserve a rematch! That damn turnbuckle! Of all the rotten, miserable breaks! Why am I no longer champion? Because I hit my head! Tell me it's a nightmare! Someone tell me it's a nightmare!"

It was a nightmare alright, but a real one.

"I will wrestle all over the world against all worthy opponents," Inoki later promised. Naturally, Johnny Powers will get a rematch very soon. He is a very worthy opponent."

The match will probably take place in Cleveland in the near future. It will be strange for Powers to return to Cleveland as the challenger for the title he defended so many times in that city.

"I'm going to get the title back," Powers declared through clenched teeth recently. "I'm the one who rightfully owns it.

Johnny Powers had Antonio Inoki beat. But when he accidentally cracked his head on a metal turnbuckle, that fluke of wrestling luck cost Johnny his N.W.F. title



Johnny Powers delivers a series of elbow smashes (above) to the neck of Japan's Antonio Inoki. Johnny's "powerlock" took the second fall. A cobra twist (below) is the beginning of the end for Johnny Powers.

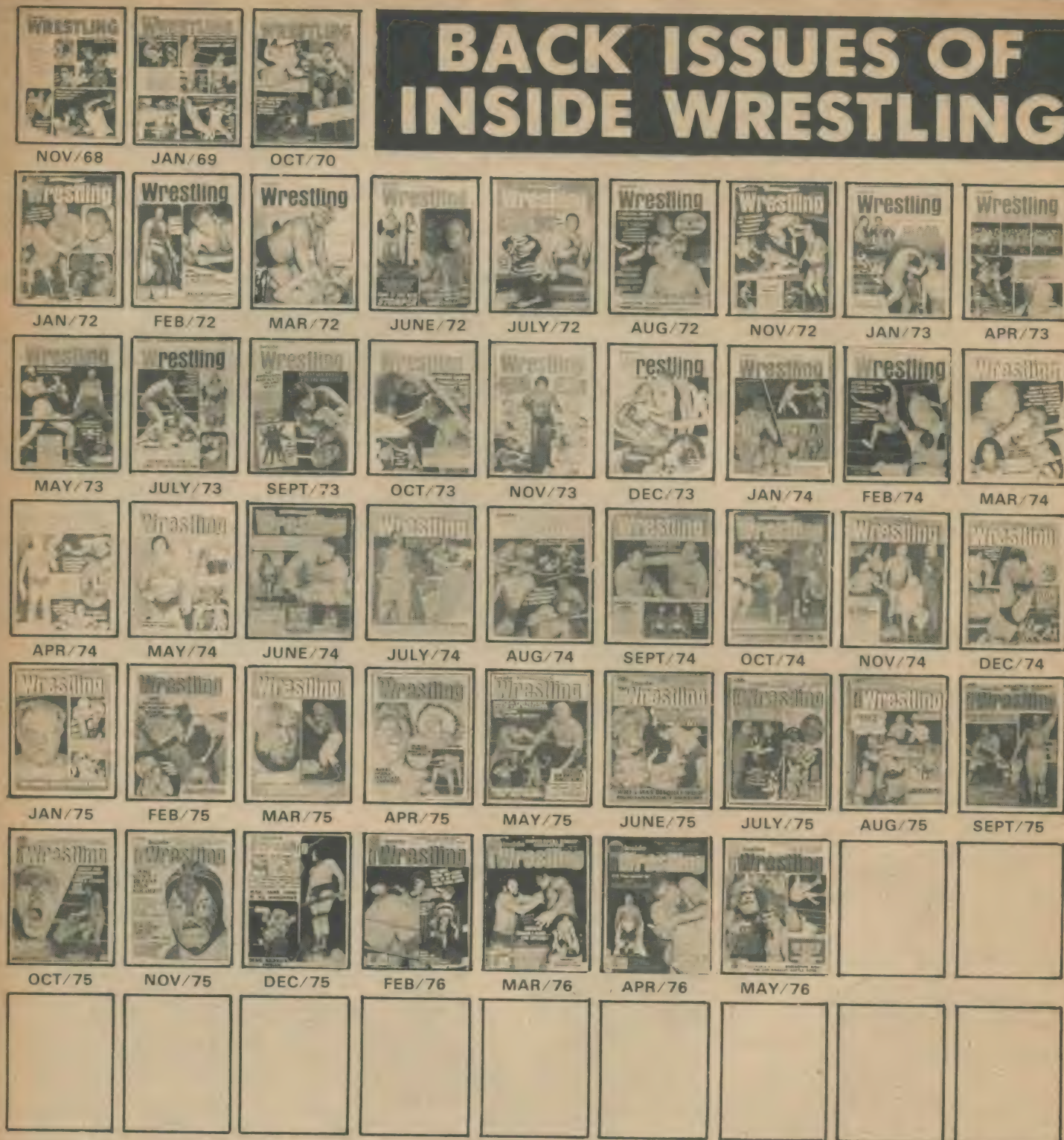


A championship shouldn't be lost on a fluke of luck. It must be earned!

"I'm not saying Inoki isn't a great wrestler — he is. He's one of the toughest opponents I've ever faced. But I know I had him beaten!"

However, Johnny is very aware that the championship belt is now around Antonio Inoki's waist. □

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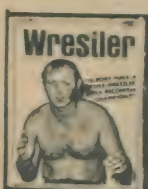
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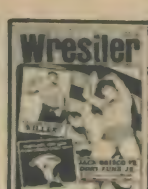
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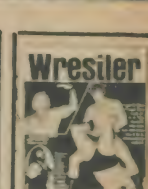
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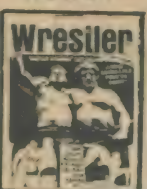
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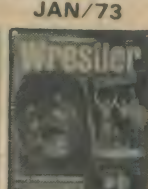
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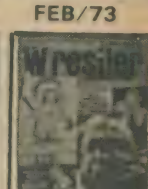
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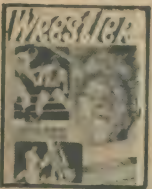
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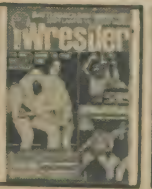
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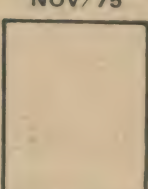
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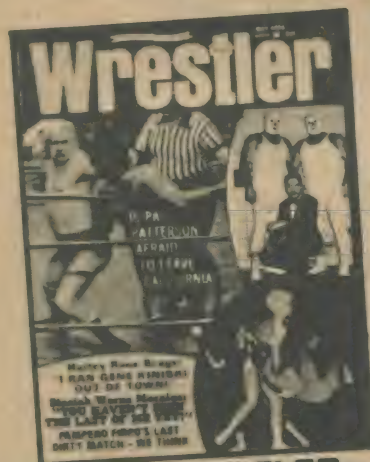


BULLET-HEADED Hans Schmidt is the kind of villain who provokes such bromides as: "He has a look that would curdle milk." Yet there was at least one occasion when he did somebody a favor—though, even then, he had an ulterior motive. It was during a bout with the Flying Frenchman, Edouard Carpentier, in Chicago. That night, the Frenchman was really flying and there was this kid, maybe 14 or 15 years old, trying desperately to get a shot of Ed. After a while, his flashbulbs started to annoy Schmidt. At one point, Hans waved a fist at the kid and snarled: "Cut that out, you stupid jerk—you're blinding me!" But the fledgling camera hound kept popping away and Hans kept burning up. Too busy chasing the somersaulting Frenchman, Schmidt didn't have time to bust that "stupid kid's" camera. The only thing he

could hope to do was to grab the slippery Frenchman and hold him for just a second so that the kid could take his picture. Maybe that would satisfy the brat and he'd stop popping his flashgun. Hans tried every maneuver to nail Carpentier but Ed bounced all over the ring, dashing in occasionally to smash Schmidt in the gut or stagger him with a dropkick. The chase was wearing Hans down. Panting heavily, he stood near the ropes and, pointing with his finger, called Carpentier's attention to the kid. But Ed didn't understand. When the flashgun went off again, Hans went wild. He lunged at Ed and just managed to grab him by the pants. "Stand still, dammit!" he roared. "That kid wants to take your picture!" Ed stood still and the kid got his picture—but our man got a better one, from behind—with this result. □

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**ERNIE
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HE STANDS SIX feet, nine inches tall. He packs 325 pounds of solid muscle on that huge frame. His quickness has been likened to that of a cat. He's proclaimed himself the "King of Wrestling"

and not many men will challenge that statement. Since retiring from professional football he has become one of the dominant forces in wrestling. His name is Ernie Ladd.

Q: Welcome to the "Hotseat,"

Ernie.

A: Thank you, although I'm not sure of what I'm letting myself in for.

Q: The first question we'd like to ask you is this: Many people say



Does Ernie Ladd try to choke opponents and drive his thumb into their throats? Naaah. Ernie would never do anything like that (above). But what he does do (he admits this one) is lift his opponent up by the throat (right). And when you're 6-9 it means you can lift him high enough to prevent the referee from seeing the choke.



you're big and strong and quick but that you really can't wrestle worth a damn. What's your reaction to that?

A: Well I don't know who's saying that but it's obvious they don't

know what they're talking about. In the short time I've been wrestling I've already won the Americas championship, the National Wrestling Federation world championship and the

North American Heavyweight title. There are guys who've been wrestling 20 years and never won a single title. I'd say I'm doing all right for a guy who "can't wrestle worth a damn."

Q: You've been quoted as saying that before you're through you're going to win the N.W.A., A.W.A. and W.W.W.F. heavyweight titles. What makes you so sure?

A: In one week I wrestle in Boston, New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Toronto. I cover the territory in which Dory Funk Jr. and Pedro Morales defend their titles. Before long I'll be heading for Verne Gagne's stomping grounds. Nobody else wrestles in all those areas.

Q: But just because you wrestle there it doesn't necessarily follow that you'll win all three titles, does it?

A: Look. Gagne's an antique. Funk Jr. is a midget-sized punk kid. Morales is a tiny greaseball with oatmeal for brains. The only way any of 'em can avoid losing his title to me is by refusing to wrestle me.

Q: Although there are some places like Cleveland and upper New York State in which the fans seem to like you, you're hated most everywhere else. Why do you think that's so?

A: Let me tell you something about that. At first it bothered me. I mean I couldn't figure it out, man. Then I finally caught on. Let me give you an example. One afternoon in Utica, New York, I was wrestling Waldo Von Erich. The fans were diggin' me 100 percent, man. Later that same day, in an arena not far away, I wrestled Cyclone Soto. The fans, some of 'em the same ones who'd been cheering for me that afternoon, were now rooting for Soto to tear my head off. Why? Because Soto is a big hero in that area. I've found out that it's not so much a wrestler's style of wrestling that determines how the fans react—it's who his opponent happens to be.

Q: As far as you're concerned,

**"I AM THE KING AND
THEY'RE PEASANTS"**



Ernie drives his bandaged thumb (above) right into the eye of Ruben Juarez. The camera does not lie, Ernie. Left: John Tolos gets even for some earlier punishment by slugging "The King."



which area has the worst fans?

A: You tryin' to get me killed?

Q: Nope. But there's got to be one area you're not too fond of.

A: There is. Los Angeles. The worst fans in the world are in Los Angeles.

Q: Why do you say that?

A: They're too provincial. Look. Like those cats who wrestle in L.A., man, they're terrible. I mean they stink! But the fans there think those guys are great. So what happens when someone like me comes there and shows up all their hometown boys? The fans can't handle it. They throw tomatoes and stuff at me.

Q: Yeah, but we've seen you wrestle, and a few times it seems you deserve to have tomatoes thrown at you.

A: Okay, man. I'm rough sometimes. But I'm fair. You dig? Let me lay an example on you. Take this dude Mil Mascaras. He's a

classy-looking cat with a good build. But he can't wrestle worth a damn. The night he tried to take the Americas belt away from me I actually *let* him win the first fall. I didn't want him to cry when I beat him in the next few falls. But as soon as the going got rough he got two of his *amigos*, Raul Mata and Ruben Juarez, to come in and attack me from behind. Juarez even took off his shoe and beat me with it until I started bleeding! Now that's ridiculous, man. I mean if a cat's gonna be a wrestler he should be able to take it like a man without calling in all his friends.

Q: You never had anybody help you when you were in trouble?

A: Never, man. I don't *need* anybody's help. I can do it all!

Q: Since you can do it all, why do you wear that bandage on your thumb? Isn't it so you can rake

it across your opponent's eyes?

A: C'mon, man. I never do that. I wear a bandage because I have a serious thumb injury from my football days. If I don't keep it protected it can pop on me at any time. Anyone who thinks I use my thumb injury as an excuse to use the bandage on my opponent has a serious brain injury. I'd never do something like that unless my opponent did it first. I'm a true sport.

Q: C'mon, Ernie. We've *seen* you give guys the thumb. We've got pictures of it.

A: Like I said, man, they must have done it first. I only do that in self defense.

Q: What about foreign objects? You've used foreign objects in the ring. If you're as great as you say you are—why do you need them?

A: You're wrong, man. The only time I use foreign objects is if



"WHEN A CAT'S GOT NOTHIN' GOIN' FOR HIM IT'S EASY TO BE MODEST"



Ernie can dish out the punishment but he also takes it. Above, left: Tough Ruben Juarez has Ernie trying to slide his big legs under the ropes to escape from a chinlock. Above, right: Ernie treats Juarez like a slingshot as he pulls his legs backwards while Ruben holds onto the ropes with everything in his power.

my opponent brings 'em into the ring and I take them away from him.

Q: You expect us to buy that?

A: I don't care whether you do or not.

Q: What about what you did to Abdullah the Butcher? You tried to kill him and you know it!

A: That's different, man. He ain't no human being. Just thinking of him burns me up. He made some racial remarks about me and that's where I draw the line. I don't care what a man's beef is when he's in that ring, but when he starts puttin' down my heritage he's puttin' nails in his own coffin.

Q: Aside from Abdullah, is there any other wrestler you don't like?

A: Bobo Brazil. The fans really have the wrong idea about that cat. When I first broke in I teamed with him. I thought we

could be good friends. But he ordered me around like some damned office boy. He kept saying "I'm the star and I run this team. You follow my orders." No way, man. I don't follow nobody's orders. A few months later I showed him who the boss was. I gave him a beating so bad he had to be carried out on a stretcher!

Q: Is that something to be proud of?

A: Yeah, it is.

Q: When you get into the ring you strut around. Why? What purpose does it serve?

A: It shows the peasants I'm The King. I walk tall and pretty, man.

Q: Wait a second. What do you mean by "peasants?" Is that what the fans are to you? Peasants?

A: Some fans are cool. But most of 'em are peasants. I'm The

King and they're peasants.

Q: These fans pay your salary.

A: So what? When The King wrestles they get their money's worth.

Q: It's obvious modesty isn't your strong point.

A: Lemme tell you somethin' baby. The only people who are modest are people who have something to be modest about. Dig? That's like people with inferiority complexes. Most of 'em have those complexes because they're really inferior. When a cat's got nothin' goin' for him it's easy to be modest.

Q: Okay. Let's change the subject. If you were in charge of all wrestling in the United States and Canada, what would you do to change the sport?

A: That's a tough question. Lemme think. Well, one thing I'd do is make it so that a man who holds

(Continued on page 56)

Speaking From The Heart

IN THIS EXCLUSIVE ARTICLE,
THE MAN WHO HELD THE
HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPIONSHIP LONGER
THAN ANYBODY ELSE TELLS
OF THE STARTLING
DISCOVERIES HE'S MADE
SINCE HE BECAME THE
EX-CHAMPION . . .



'I'M GLAD I Says

LOU THESZ RUBBED the rose-scented pomade into his thinning hair until it shone like a mirror in sunlight. Then the man who had held the heavy-

weight wrestling championship of the world longer than any other man in history pulled the belt around his navy blue robe tight, tied a

knot and headed out of his dressing room.

Waiting for him in the ring was the man who had relieved him of his title more than two years



★★ OFFICIAL ALL STAR ★★
WRESTLING CARD

DOUBLE MAIN EVENT

WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
 NO TIME LIMIT
 PAUL JONES, REFEREE
GENE KINISKI
(CHAMPION)
 VS
LOU THESZ
(CHALLENGER)

WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
TORRES BROS.
 ENRIQUE & RAMON (CHAMPIONS)
 VS
VACHON BROS.
 BUTCHER & STAN (CHALLENGERS)

RAY GUNKEL VS. MIGHTY HERCULES

SUPPORTING MATCHES

Buddy Fuller
 Mr. Wrestling
 Timothy Geohagen VS. El Mongol
 Black Jack
 Alex Perez

BAD BOY HINES
 - VS -
 MR. KLEEN

DR. JERRY GRAHAM
 - VS -
 DENNIS HALL

RICK HUNTER
 - VS -
 LOUIE TILLET

LOST MY TITLE'

LOU THESZ

before—Gene Kiniski. If Lou could beat Kiniski tonight, he would regain the title for an unbelievable fifth time. But, strangely, the 48-year-

old ex-champ seemed preoccupied with something that to him was even more important than winning championships and breaking

records. Earlier that evening, Lou had confided to fellow wrestler Buddy Fuller, with whom he shared the dressing room, that



THESZ



Thesz punished Kiniski badly with hammerlocks (above) and at one point had the champion groggy and on the verge of defeat (right).

being champion had its disadvantages.

"Everytime I went into the ring with the championship belt around my waist," Lou told Fuller, "I got the feeling that people were hoping I'd lose. But, I suppose, that was only natural. People always root for the underdog."

It was that way when Thesz climbed through the ropes to face Kiniski. Lou got the cheers and Gene got the boos. The kids crowded around beneath Thesz' corner, shoving out bits of paper, programs and magazines for him to auto-

graph. As Lou signed his name over and over, he couldn't help being moved by the looks of delight on all those faces when he handed back the signed pieces of paper. It wasn't that way when he wore the championship belt. No, it wasn't anything like this.

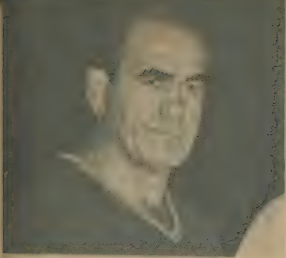
To prove to himself that he wasn't imagining things, Lou glanced across the ring at Kiniski, who was standing alone, glaring with envy at Thesz. Not a living soul was asking for his autograph.

Thesz looked at the

solid gold belt around Gene's waist and slowly shook his head. It was no great trick to read what was running through his mind—the belt or the cheers? Which was more important?

These mixed emotions were reflected in Thesz's performance that night. To put it generously, Lou wasn't at his best. He missed dropkicks by as much as five feet, let Gene easily spin out of headlocks. Even Lou's specialty, the flying head scissors, proved about as effective as a .22 bullet against a Sherman tank.





THESZ

Kiniski retained his title by knocking Thesz out of the ring, and keeping him outside the ropes for 20 seconds.

pion. It's a helluva high price to pay even for all the money and glory. I like it better this way—being the challenger." □



Thesz's agility is remarkable. The harder Kiniski slammed him to the mat, the faster Lou bounced up—like a rubber ball (left). He paced himself carefully, breaking out of holds with elbow smashes (above). When he wanted to rest, Lou used holds like the head scissors to inactivate Kiniski (below).

Lou fussed and fumed, seemingly angered by his own mistakes and ineffectiveness. But down deep, this was probably the only match in his long career which he didn't mind losing. The old pro had come to know and to be very proud of the resounding cheers that were now all for him.

After he had finished dressing and was ready to leave the arena, Thesz summed it up this way for our reporter:

"A guy can get terribly lonely being cham-



EXCLUSIVE!

*This is
the hold
that won
it for me.
The suplex.
It took years
to master it.*

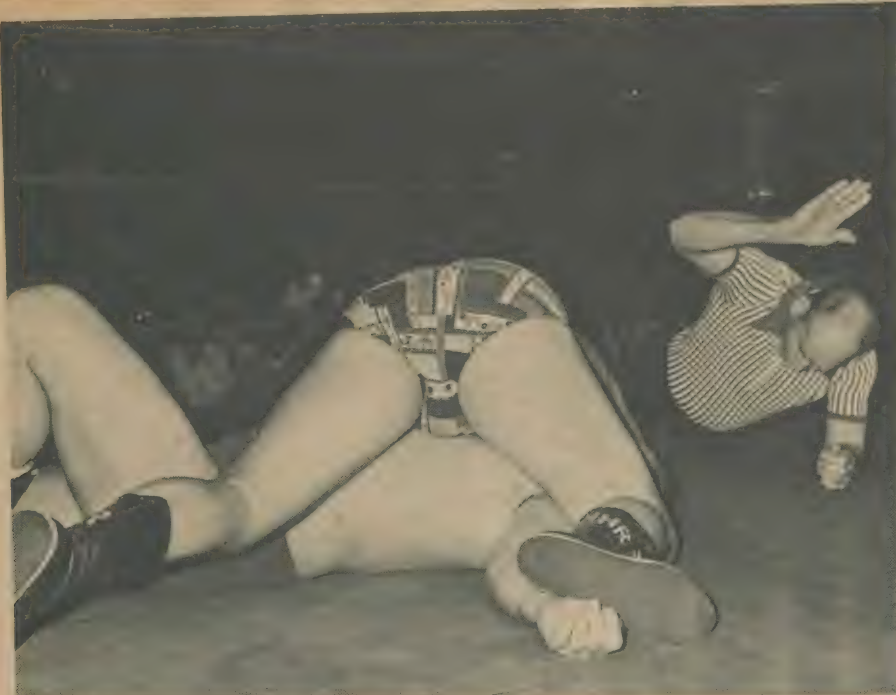


"HOW I WON THE TITLE FROM DORY JR."



*The greatest moment of my life.
I'm the new N.W.A. world champion!*

There's a new N.W.A. Heavyweight Champion. Harley Race. And in this exclusive story, Harley tells about the night he won the title and how he successfully defended it against his toughest challenger to date—Bruno Sammartino. It's the kind of up-to-the-minute, in-depth feature you'll find in no other magazine!



The referee's about to count "three" and Dory Jr.'s not getting up (left). Nobody gets up from my suplex. Here I am (below) posed with the belt right after the match. Don't I make a great looking champion!



By **HARLEY RACE**
N.W.A. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION

As Told To
LARRY MATYSIK
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

I REMEMBER SEPTEMBER of 1964 quite vividly for one reason. I wrestled former world champion Pat O'Connor in St. Louis, Missouri, on a television card. O'Connor took advantage of my inexperience and pinned me with a reverse rolling cradle.

On my way back to the dressing room some loudmouth fan stood in my way and yelled at me, "You bum! You'll never beat a man like O'Connor! You'll never be a champion! You stink!"

I wonder where that fan is today? He's probably sitting at some corner tavern shouting stupid instructions and complaints to a hapless bartender or laying around at home berating his poor wife.

Really, I don't care what that insolent oaf is doing. I know what I'm doing. I am living the life of a king. I AM the king. I am Harley Race, the World Heavyweight Champion as recognized by the National Wrestling Alliance.

And during my march to become the ruler of professional wrestling I disposed of the very same Pat O'Connor, right in St. Louis so old leather-lung could appreciate just how wrong he was.

I was born in the tiny Missouri village of Quitman and went to school in Savannah. Believe me, friend, I was a good football player, but wrestling was always the sport that

appealed to me. I turned down a few offers to play college football because I had the chance to enter professional wrestling at the age of 16. I couldn't see any reason to fool around for four years, risk a serious injury in football, and never earn a dime in the process. I believed the sooner I got started in wrestling the sooner I would get to the top. As has usually been the case, I was correct.

Everything really fell into place on May 24, 1973. That night, at hot, smoky, jam-packed Memorial Hall in Kansas City, Kansas, I beat the man nobody else could stop—Dory Funk, Jr.—to become the World Champion. That single victory proved I made the right decision 14 years ago.

My nerves were tight during the day of May 24, but I really wasn't what could be called tense. I was ready, as sharp as a knife that can split a hair down the middle. I had been running hard, swimming a lot, tramping the woods hunting, and especially spending a lot of time in the gym rolling around the mats. At no other time in my career have I been so well-prepared for a single match.

But the World Championship is the "big one!" This is it, what every single man in this savage sport works for. Sure, I've won more than my share of regional and tag team titles. Every time my hand is raised, it's a thrill. Yet nothing can compare to earning recognition as the very, very best in your business.

I knew Funk would be extremely tough. He had been out of action for 10 weeks with a shoulder injury suffered in a truck accident on his

father's farm, but he had delayed his return until he was fully recovered. Dory had had several bouts before May 24 and many people had told me he never looked better, the rest seemed to have given him new spark.

Yet when the bell rang and that crowd let out a rafter-rattling roar, I felt completely in command. Funk was often on the offensive, but I never got worried. I whacked his shoulder a few times just to test it, but it didn't even bother this lean, hard Texan. Brother, let me tell you that Funk is tough!

I really can't recall the exact sequence of events leading up to when I won the first fall just over 11 minutes. I know that I stunned Funk enough so that I found it easy to apply my "giant suplex slam," a hold I learned the basics of watching Greco-Roman competition at the Olympics in Tokyo, Japan several years ago.



Dory's got me cryin' uncle as he applies his spinning toehold during the second fall (left). I submitted purposely so I wouldn't risk serious injury that would prevent me from going into the next fall. Earlier in the second fall I tried to pin Dory with a flying reverse cradle (above) but he escaped. I almost had him in two straight falls. I won't knock Dory. He was a great champion and I'll gladly give him a rematch if he wants to try to win the title back. I can guarantee you I'll be champ for a long time.

When I raised my arm after that first stanza, I knew I would be the champion at the end of the event. Even when I was trapped in Dory's painful spinning toehold and had to concede the second fall I didn't lose that iron confidence that "tonight is the night." In fact, I didn't struggle too long in the toehold because I didn't want to risk an injury that would end the match then and there.

The third fall was nip-and-tuck all the way. Each of us had several opportunities to get pins, but Funk could never keep me where he wanted me. I was hot, my finger had been smashed and I had a nasty mat burn on my chest. I felt, however, as sharp as ever—like a giant piece of machinery that refuses to break down.

Finally Funk dumped me and put on the spinning toehold. I kicked him in the chest with my free foot as hard as I could and Dory flew backwards into that stumblebum referee, Richard Moody. As I started to get up Funk flew off the ropes with a cross body block and rode me to the mat.

I squirmed free. Some people, who don't like me anyway and admit that fact, say my shoulders were down for a three-count and Moody just didn't recover in time to make judgment. I don't think I was down for three. Nobody could have stopped me in that final fall.

As soon as we got up I grabbed Funk and easily found him in a position for my suplex. I held him high in the air and put every bounce of weight and muscle at my command into smashing Funk into the canvas.

I knew Funk would never recover. No man could have taken that suplex slam and not been pinned. I rolled across Dory Jr. and heard Moody slap the mat three times. I was the winner! World Champion!

Joy, boy, that just doesn't describe the delicious feeling I had at that moment. Sam Muchnick, the St. Louis promoter and president of the N.W.A., got me on the telephone and congratulated me. But Sam is a businessman. He quickly explained I would now have to pick up the bookings already made by Funk.

That was fine with me because it

meant I would get to tangle with burly Bruno Sammartino in St. Louis' Kiel Auditorium. It would give me a chance to deflate the man they call a living legend along the East Coast.

There were a few bouts before I squared off with Sammartino and I handled them with ease. I combined training and wrestling with enjoying the good life I had earned.

You know, I can't understand why some narrow-minded people criticize the likes of Joe Namath and Derek Sanderson for having fun. "Playboys!" is always what they sneer at these fine athletes. Well, that's so much baloney.

I've had the same charge hurled at me. Naturally I enjoy life to the fullest. There's nothing better than enjoying the pleasant company of a beautiful young lady at a classy restaurant and a fine show. There's no more fun than hurtling down a ski slope or diving into clear, blue water.

Anybody who criticizes me for that is simply showing his ignorance. I never let having fun interfere with winning wrestling matches. And I've got one edge over guys like Namath



I think one of the things that led to Dory's downfall was his overconfidence. He didn't consider me a serious threat to the title. Nobody did. But I fooled 'em all. When Dory flipped me (left) and put me in an abdominal stretch (right) he thought I'd give up. He was really shocked when I flipped out of it. Only a great champion like me can accomplish this.



and Sanderson—they were on top for one year before dropping down into the also-rans. Harley Race, friends, is going to be on top of wrestling for years to come.

Now Sammartino presented a different problem from Funk. Bruno is a strongman who knows how to wrestle. He depends on his tremendous power to wear you down until the pin is a mere formality.

But Bruno couldn't do it to me.

I was cautious in the opening fall, perhaps a bit too much so. Sammartino worked on my left arm and made it hurt. But I finally got rolling and jolted him with a few knees and punches before using the atomic knee drop to take that first fall.

My biggest problem was with the referee, Lou Thesz. Just because the guy held the title six times he thinks he can push people around. I didn't like it one bit when he pulled my arm or shoved me, but I like to show respect for those much older than me so I ignored it.

Nobody can hold off a powerhouse like Sammartino forever. That big bear got into me and began working on my back. When he drives a knee into the lower part of your back it feels like a sledgehammer thumping you. If it hadn't been for the fact that my body is always supple from not

doing much weight-lifting but concentrating on plenty of wrestling and swimming, he'd have ripped some muscle apart.

Finally, Sammartino trapped me in the bearhug. I had already broken out of it a few times, but this time he had me high in the air with all the pressure on my back and ribs. I could see no purpose in ruining myself for the final fall. So I gave up. But, believe me, I'll never do that in a decisive stanza when the championship goes if I submit.

I played it cool in the third fall. Through my experience with regional championships like the Missouri State and Central States, I know a champion can wrestle defensively. The challenger has to beat you. A draw is as good as a win.

And that's just what happened with Sammartino. He gave me all he could, but it didn't stop me. Sure, I was hurt and stunned a few times. I'm fortunate though that I've been blessed with natural instinct inside the ring. I know what to do when I'm in trouble. And I know how to conserve my energy so that I have something left when my opponent makes a mistake.

Sammartino did earn my respect. I knocked him around pretty hard

Dory's got me in an airplane spin during the final fall (below). He couldn't hold me up there for more than a few seconds. I had drained all the energy out of him in the previous falls. I knew I had him beaten at this point.



(Continued on page 62)

HOW "SUPERSTAR" BILLY GRAHAM OUTSMARTED BILLY ROBINSON!

Photos By
Terrance R. Machalek



Billy Graham (above) begs Billy Robinson not to work him over any more as he'd been doing (below). Robinson mulled it over for a few moments and those few moments cost him a title shot against Verne Gagne. Because when he hesitated, Graham got his second wind back and thought up a diabolical plan to trick Billy out of winning.



BILLY ROBINSON WAS tricked. Tricked out of a title shot.

The dream Billy's been chasing—getting a shot at Verne Gagne's American Wrestling Association heavyweight crown—may never become a reality.

Who's to blame?

Some may say Robinson himself. But Billy "Superstar" Graham happily accepts the blame. "I tricked him out of the title shot," Graham grinned. "He has nothing else to blame except my cleverness and his utter stupidity."

It all boils down to this. Graham and Robinson were both ranked second in the A.W.A. ratings. A promoter in Winnipeg, Manitoba set up a match between them to determine the number one challenger. The loser would have to go to the bottom of the list and wait his turn again. Since neither Graham nor Robinson wanted to go back to the bottom of the list, the match promised to be a no-holds-barred, all out war!

It was set as a one fall to a finish match. However, one new rule set down by the A.W.A. and N.W.A. is that a wrestler can't throw his opponent over the top rope. If he does, he's disqualified. So both men now had to be careful not to show what great pitchers they are.

Verne Gagne, the champion, claimed, "I'm anxious to wrestle either one. But I think the more interesting match would be against Robinson. Robinson is a damn good wrestler. Graham is too, but he likes to roughhouse it. You've got to meet him punch for punch and kick for kick. If I lost the title I wouldn't want it to get into the hands of Billy

Billy Robinson's number finally came up. He was within arm's length of getting his long awaited shot at the A.W.A. title. But because of "Superstar" Billy Graham—Robinson may never get a title match against Verne Gagne

Graham! I'd rather see Robinson get it."

Robinson doubts the genuineness of Gagne's statement.

"I don't know how sincere Gagne is about wrestling me," Billy stated. "I'm not trying to place myself on a pedestal, but Verne knows I could whip him any time! He's not as anxious as you think."

"Regarding Billy Graham—I've wrestled him in tag team matches several times and I'm confident I can defeat the man. I'll have to be very careful though because Graham is full of tricks."

Graham is even trickier than Billy thinks. He'll pull no punches to get the title shot.

"Robinson is an overrated Limey," Graham said. "When I get through with him I'll send him back to England the way he got here, on a refugee boat!"

On the night of the match both men seemed equally nervous. Neither would talk to reporters. Finally the two top contenders for the A.W.A. title climbed between the ropes. Graham strutted around wearing an "Apache" headband and looking confident. Robinson did kneebends in his corner to loosen up.

When the bell rang, Robinson darted out of his corner like a hungry cat after his prey. He rocked "Superstar" Graham with a flying dropkick that sent the blond terror zooming halfway across the mat. Graham landed hard on his butt.

Superstar jumped to the arena floor for a few seconds to catch his breath. When he got back onto the apron, Robinson was there. He snap mared Graham over the ropes and back inside.

The tricky Graham caught Billy looking aside momentarily and smashed his fist into the Englishman's stomach. Robinson doubled up in pain. Superstar kept up his attack, kicking and stomping Billy's stomach.

(Continued on page 58)



Robinson (above) appears to be confused, and he is, since the referee has just informed him he has been disqualified for throwing Billy Graham out of the ring. Graham (right) gloats about his ability to trick Robinson out of a title shot. He says Robinson has "a weak mind."



BRUNO AND THE BUT HOW LONG



UP UNTIL A few months ago, Bruno Sammartino and Gorilla Monsoon were the bitterest of enemies. Sharing a searing hate for each other, they never failed to pack the arenas, for the fans knew that every meeting between them would rival the gladiator contests of ancient Rome in sheer brutality and blood-letting.

"He's a no-good snob," Monsoon used to snarl. "Just looking at him makes me want to tear his head off!"

Sammartino's reaction to Monsoon was verbally more restrained, but no less intense. "He knows very little of true wrestling," Bruno would say, "and he tries to get by with dirty tactics and unnecessary roughness. He belongs in an alley, not in the ring!"



All that has changed. Today, Bruno and Gorilla are not only tag-team partners, they are also the closest of friends. Bruno's wife cooks Gorilla's favorite dish, spaghetti, whenever he comes to the Sammartino house for dinner. And Bruno always has an armful of toys for Gorilla's children when the Sammartinos visit the Monsoons.

We asked Bruno and Gorilla what caused this dramatic change from sworn enemies to bosom pals. Sammartino grinned, "It started the night my former partner, Bobo Brazil, and I were supposed to wrestle The Sheik and his partner...I forget who it was that night.

"Bobo was to fly in from Philadelphia for the match, but the flight was

GORILLA ARE PALS WILL IT LAST?



Big Ernie Ladd is about to yank Bruno up by the arm so that he can kick him in the chest. But when he did, Monsoon jumped into the ring and locked Ladd in a bear hug (right). Opposite page: Bruno and Gorilla talk pre-bout strategy; Bruno smiles warmly to crowd when introduced.

canceled at the last moment because of bad weather. Madison Square Garden was already filled when we got word that Bobo couldn't make it."

Now Gorilla took up the story. "It just happened I wasn't wrestling that night, so I'd come to the Garden to watch. I'm as big a fan as anybody, you know. Besides, I was hoping to see Bruno get a few lumps.

"When Bobo didn't show, Promoter Vince McMahon came up and asked me if I'd go in as a substitute for Brazil and wrestle as Bruno's partner.

"I thought Vince had flipped his lid, and I told him so. Me team up with Sammartino? Team up with that swell-headed so and so, that... The more I talked and the more I

thought about it, the madder I got. But you know, Vince is a great salesman, and after a while he calmed me down and talked me into it. He pointed out that the fans were out there waiting, and that wrestling would suffer if the match had to be canceled."

Bruno broke in to say, "When Vince asked me to team up with Gorilla, I was just as much against it as he was. Bobo was, and still is, one of my best friends, and I thought it would be disloyal to him to team with someone else. Besides, Gorilla wasn't my idea of a guy I wanted for a partner.

"But McMahon gave me a sell job, too, and I finally agreed to do it just this once... if Gorilla would."

Monsoon nodded in agreement. "So that's what we both did... went in the ring together as tag-team partners, this one time only, to save the show.

"It probably would have ended that night, too," Gorilla continued, "but for one thing. And that thing changed both our lives and made us buddies and partners instead of enemies. What happened was I hadn't expected to wrestle that night, and so I hadn't "psyched" myself up like I usually do before a match. As a result, I was 'way below my usual form—and it was just my bum luck that The Sheik was wrestling 'way above his. You know how rough he is, with all his biting and gouging—well, he

(Continued)

was rougher than ever that night.

"The payoff came when he bit me on the neck and almost tore my jugular vein. I was in terrible pain. I couldn't get my breath, and instead of disqualifying him, as he should have done, the referee let him keep working me over, even though I was defenseless."

Bruno nodded and said, "I could see Gorilla was in real trouble, that The Sheik should be disqualified and that Gorilla should be rushed to the hospital. But the referee wasn't doing a damn thing! I had to do something, and quick."

"I jumped into the ring, tagged Gorilla and told him to get out quick. Then I picked The Sheik up, boosted him over my head, slammed him to the mat and pinned him. I didn't even wait for the full count, because I knew, after that slam, that he wouldn't be getting up... not in time, at least."

I hopped out of the ring and yelled for the house physician to take care of Gorilla. We rushed him to the hospital—and just in time. It was a very close call!"

"Bruno saved my life that night," Gorilla said, "and during those hours when they were patching me up, I



began to realize that maybe I had the wrong slant on things—that maybe people like Bruno weren't so bad after all.

"I decided then and there that I'd like to have him for a regular tag-team partner, and when I could talk again I told him that if he felt the same way, I'd go to Bobo Brazil and ask him to release Bruno as his partner. Bruno said it was okay with him. He said he'd be glad to have me for a partner, but that his first loyalty was to Bobo. I'd have to get his consent.

"When I put it up to Bobo, he was hesitant at first. But he understood my position and said, 'I was just like you, once—a man in need of a friend I could trust and confide in. Someone who would treat me like an equal and not make me feel like I was being patronized. Bruno's been just that. He's been the best friend I ever had. And if he can do the same for you as he did for me, I'll feel I've done some-

Sammartino wobbles on his knees as Killer Kowalski is about to slug him (left). Below: Referee advises Bruno to be on his guard against Ladd and Killer.



Sammartino about to deliver crushing knee-lift on Ernie Ladd. "I really don't like to knee anybody," Bruno said later, "but Ladd deserved it!" in the groin! Ladd was disqualified and Monsoon was carted off to the hospital. His personal sacrifice to save Bruno laid him up for several weeks.

When Monsoon finally recovered, he and Sammartino demanded a rematch with Ladd and Kowalski. And Gorilla startled sportswriters by announcing, "We're going to beat them, and we're going to do it by wrestling clean! Bruno's convinced me that clean is the only way to wrestle!"

True to Gorilla's prediction, he and Bruno romped over Ladd and Kowalski—in straight falls. And true to Monsoon's promise, they did it with scrupulous observance of the rules.

Gorilla was elated after that victory. "It's like I always say," he chortled, "A good partner and good, clean wrestling will win every time." For those who knew the Gorilla Monsoon of old, it was a shocking turnabout.

It was more. It was proof that Mammy Yokum wasn't a-whistlin' down in Dogpatch when she said that goodness is better than badness 'cause it's nicer.

Ask Bruno Sammartino. He'll agree that his buddy, Gorilla Monsoon, is a helluva lot nicer than he used to be. □

We could see Bruno was squirming with embarrassment. "Believe me, he said, 'that's only Gorilla's side of the story. You'd think he was in *my* debt, but the truth is, I owe *him* plenty. He saved my skin plenty of times in our tag matches!"

Turning to Monsoon, he asked, "Remember that night against Killer Kowalski and Ernie Ladd?"

Monsoon nodded. "How could I ever forget it?"

Seven-foot Ernie Ladd had always had it in for Sammartino, and that night he seemed more determined than ever to cripple or kill him. He tossed Bruno out of the ring and smashed the Italian Adonis in the mouth as he tried to climb back through the ropes, knocking him head-first into the concrete floor. Groggily, Bruno staggered to his feet and again tried to get through the ropes. This time, Ernie let go a tremendous kick—which would literally have torn Sammartino's head off, had it landed.

But Gorilla Monsoon had anticipated Ladd's move. Rushing forward, he deliberately got in the way and took the full force of the kick—right



**The
untold
story of...**

**WHEN
PEDRO
MORALES
VOWED
TO
QUIT
WRESTLING!**

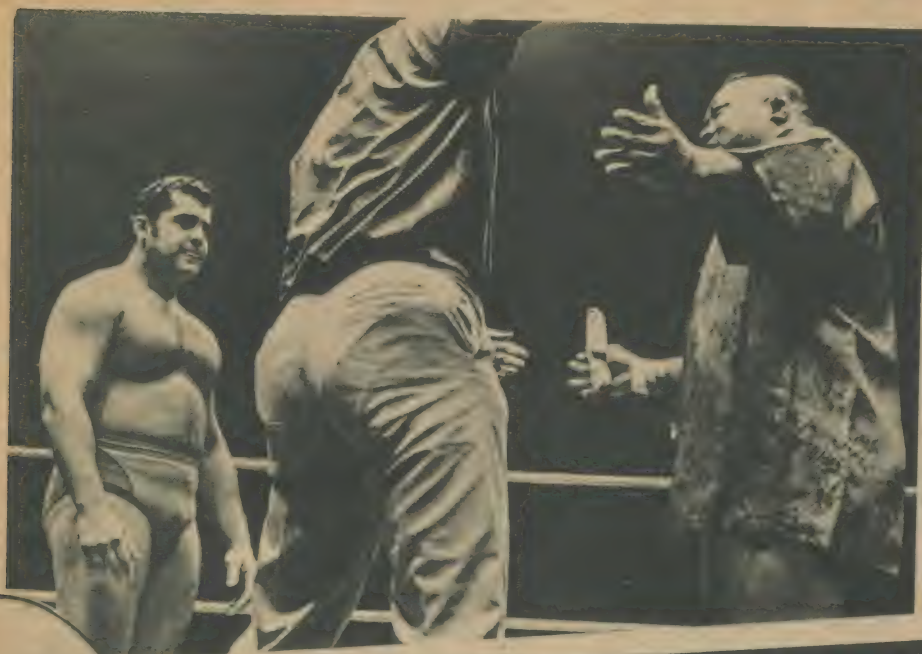


THE BRIGHTLY LIT, spacious office of Madison Square Garden wrestling promoter Vince McMahon is usually an active, animated place bustling with activity, reflecting the outgoing personality of its occupant. But this day the office seemed dreary and somber as

McMahon sat quietly in the soft recliner behind the oak desk. From time to time Vince shook his head from side to side, as if engrossed in figuring out a problem and discarding solutions. Something was bothering him and it cast a pall over the whole office.

Suddenly, footsteps were heard down the hall and the door to Vince's office swung open. World Wide Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion Pedro Morales walked in and it was obvious Pedro was in a buoyant mood.

"Hiya Vince," Pedro said, shaking



Toru Tanaka (left) holds a bag of salt in his hand as he tries to convince the referee he plans to use it for ceremonial purposes only. Below: A grim-faced Pedro Morales enters the ring. "I knew when I stepped through the ropes," Pedro said, "that I might never step through them again if I lost."



Pedro Morales (left) bristles with anger as he sees Professor Toru Tanaka take salt from his trunks.

"I take a vow," said Pedro Morales, "that if Tanaka defeats me and wins my belt—I will never set foot inside a ring again!"

the worried-looking promoter's hand. "You look like your dog bit you and you found out he's got rabies. What's the matter?"

"We've got real trouble, Pedro," McMahon replied, "and you're the only one who can get us out of it."

"Me?" Pedro asked. "I don't follow

you."

"Let me explain," McMahon continued. "Professor Tanaka was in earlier this morning checking on the title match."

"So what's so bad about that?" Pedro asked.

"He told me," McMahon respond-

ed, "that if he beats you he's going to take the title back to Japan—and that's the last we'll ever see of it. He'll only defend it there. And you know those Japanese referees. You'd have to throw Tanaka into the Pacific Ocean and wait three weeks to make sure he doesn't float back into



Look at the sly expression on Tanaka's face as he transfers the salt from his trunks to his hands while his back's turned.

the ring before they'd award you the title."

"Why didn't you put a clause in his contract saying if he won the title he'd have to defend it here?" Pedro, now equally disturbed, asked.

"Who ever thought of it," McMahon said. "Tanaka hasn't been back in Japan in years. I assumed that if he beat you he'd stay in this area and defend it here. He didn't tell me about his plan until after the contracts were signed. And there's nothing I can do about it. Pedro—if you don't defeat Tanaka—this title goes to Japan—perhaps forever!"

Morales, looking very serious now, got up and faced McMahon. "Vince," he whispered, "I make a promise here and now. I will not be the man who loses the title for this country. And I take a vow. If Tanaka defeats me and wins the belt—I will never set foot inside a ring again!"

With those words, what figured to be a routine title defense for Pedro became one of the most important battles he'd ever have to wage. And to make sure he'd have every possible advantage, he turned to the one man who could help him the most—Gorilla Monsoon.

"Monsoon used to team with Tanaka," Morales told McMahon. "He knows every move he's got. I'm sure he can teach me how to handle myself with him!"

McMahon liked the idea. And for



Pedro knocks the packet of salt from Tanaka's hands (above) at the start of their rematch. Morales wasn't taking any chances on history repeating itself. Left: Tanaka's facelock has Pedro nearly paralyzed as he digs his fingers into the champ's throat.

the first time that afternoon, he smiled. Sort of.

Within the next few weeks, Tanaka, already guaranteed a championship shot, tore up preliminary and semi-final opponents with a passion. His spare time was spent practicing his karate for the Morales match. There was nothing Professor Toru Tanaka would rather do than return to Japan with the World Wide Wres-

tling Federation heavyweight championship belt around his waist.

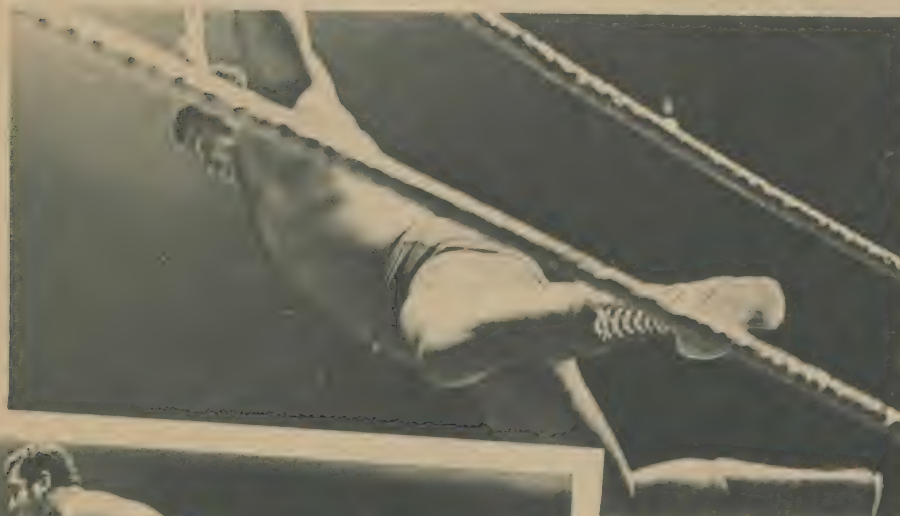
A week before the match McMahon received another shock. Tanaka, during a television interview, *denied* any plans to take the title back to Japan! "Do not worry," Tanaka said, "if I win the title I will give Morales a return match right here in the United States. Then I will take my title back to Japan."



Morales turns the tables on Toru with a facelock of his own. Tanaka nearly fainted.



This dramatic photo catches Morales and Tanaka after they collided and fell to the mat when they were each trying to bodyblock the other. Pedro got up first, but he was still too woozy to finish the professor off.



Morales takes off in a dramatic leap from the top rope (above) and lands on a stunned Toru Tanaka (left). He rolled Tanaka over and a body press ended it.

Morales, despite the lessons by Monsoon, was clearly worried. A deeply sensitive person, Pedro simply couldn't live with himself if he was the man who lost the title to someone like Tanaka.

"If I lose to Tanaka and he takes the title to Japan," Pedro repeated in secret, "I'll quit wrestling. I couldn't face my people ever again if I let the title get out of America."

Finally, the night of the match arrived. It was set at Madison Square Garden and Morales got there way ahead of time to go over Monsoon's instructions. Pedro was visibly nervous, and after a short skull session with Monsoon he stretched out on a wooden bench to try and relax.

"Hello Pedro!" a voice called from the area by the dressing room door. It was Vince McMahon Jr., the ring

announcer. "I just came by to wish you luck. Tanaka told me if he wins the title he wants a Japanese ring announcer for the rematch!" he chuckled.

Pedro laughed at the joke and it helped relax him. But outside the dressing room, the announcer was heard to say he had never seen Morales looking so nervous.

When the match began, it appeared that Pedro had every right to be worried—very worried. Tanaka's karate chops were slicing him to pieces and it seemed Pedro was thinking too much about what Monsoon had said. At about the eight minute mark, Morales woke up and stiffened Toru with a series of flying dropkicks. Pedro dropkicked Tanaka every time the Japanese wrestler got on his feet. Tanaka was reeling. But as Pedro moved in to finish him off—Toru reached into his trunks and pulled out some of his ceremonial salt he throws around before each match. He hurled the salt at Pedro. But Morales ducked. And referee Dick Kroll screamed in pain as the salt landed in his eyes.

Holding his hands across his eyes.

(Continued on page 60)

**A Psychologist
Analyzes**

THE 10 MOST



Abdullah the Butcher gets up after nearly murdering an opponent, one of many he's almost killed. According to Dr. Wilson, Abdullah is "almost a throwback to caveman days . . . with the mind of a very young child and the body of a grown man—an extremely dangerous combination."



WHEN THE EDITORS of *THE WRESTLER* and *INSIDE WRESTLING* asked me to do this assignment, I had hoped I would be able to speak at length with the 10 men in question.

Unfortunately, when most of them found out I was a psychologist, they refused to speak to me. I did get a chance to speak to some of them before they found out who I was.

The results I've drawn are drawn basically from case histories and factual incidents about these men. I've interviewed managers, promoters and even opponents to get as much information as possible.

I've listed the wrestlers' names in alphabetical order so as not to place a judgement on which man is the most dangerous or least dan-

gerous. Each one on this list has proven to be an extremely dangerous character.

ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER is a Sudanese who is almost a throwback to cave man days. He has the mind of a very young child but the body of a grown man—a very dangerous combination.

Like a child, he can be amused for long periods of time with a simple toy. Yet, when angered, he turns into an enraged, animal—almost a wild jungle beast—and becomes totally uncontrollable. He is, in effect, throwing a tantrum. When a child throws a tantrum, however, he presents no danger to others. When a man of the size of Abdullah throws a tantrum he becomes dangerous to all those around him.

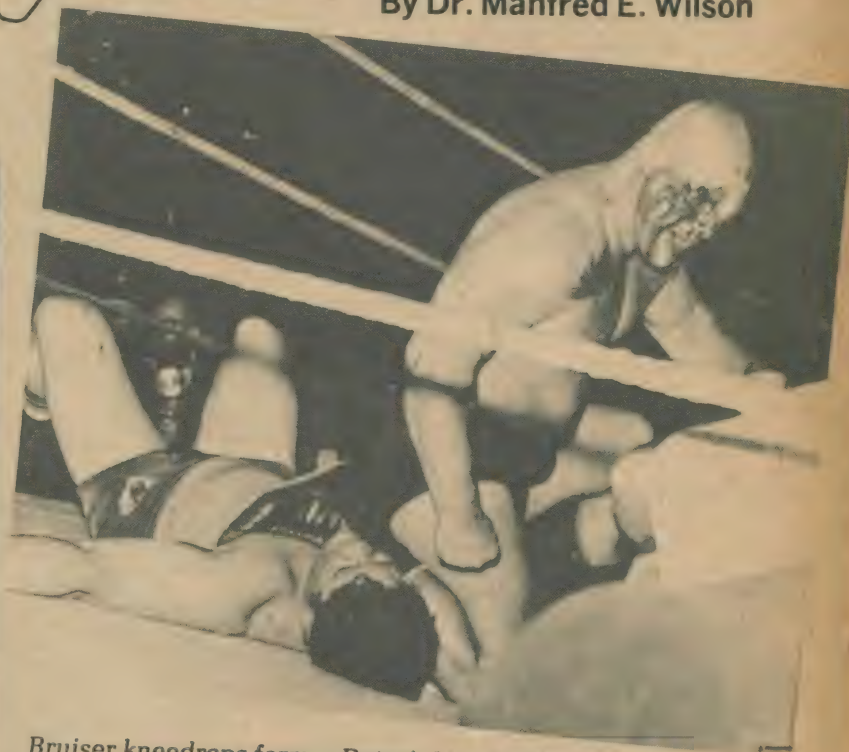
Abdullah fears what he doesn't know. He is very suspicious of anything he doesn't understand. However, unlike a child who might hide from something he fears—Abdullah attacks what he fears. And these attacks can come at any time—even when it appears he is calm.

He has a history of attacking his managers—the very people who are supposedly the closest to him. This is what makes him so dangerous. Nobody is immune. He is not capable of recognizing the difference between friend and enemy once he becomes angered. He lashes out in self-protection. This is why he has attacked policemen and even women when feeling threatened. He does not distinguish between people when angered.

DANGEROUS MEN

IN WRESTLING!!!

By Dr. Manfred E. Wilson



Bruiser kneedrops former Detroit Lion football star Alex Karras (above) during their grudge match. Left: Bruiser chokes Bobo Brazil until Brazil actually begins to foam at the mouth! Dr. Wilson says Bruiser is simply a "bully."

Wrestling is known for the number of maniacs who inhabit its world. But there are some wrestlers who go beyond the bounds of rough tactics and are truly dangerous to the fans, to other wrestlers, and even to themselves. What makes these men so dangerous? We asked Dr. Manfred E. Wilson, psychologist and wrestling fan, to analyze the men we consider the 10 most dangerous. Here is his report

Wrestling is an excellent outlet for this man because it channels these outbursts into acceptable patterns. Were it not for the opportunity to create havoc in the ring, this man would be twice as dangerous as he is now.

BRUISER is a dangerous man but for reasons far different from those governing Abdullah's case.

Ever since he was a child, Bruiser has been living in an environment

which rewarded physical strength above all other attributes. He learned at an early age he could get what he wanted by terrorizing other people. He is basically a bully who wound up in an occupation in which being a bully is rewarding.

Every job Bruiser has ever had has been physical. Even in college the emphasis for him was not on studies—it was on football. And he became an outstanding college and

pro football star by simply being rougher and tougher than anyone else.

Where Bruiser becomes dangerous is in the fact that he believes physical strength, toughness, intimidation, is the final answer to all questions. Throughout his life he has earned respect by being tougher than anyone else and he is even willing to prove this toughness against impossible odds.

Continued

The famous incident in Alex Karas' bar is a case in point. He tried to take apart the whole place knowing he'd eventually be swarmed under. But the fact that it took a dozen policemen to do it made the incident a victory in his mind.

Bruiser is an intelligent man, not in terms of formal education, but in what might be termed "street knowledge." He came up the hard way. And while such activities as football, being a bouncer in a casino, and professional wrestling makes him respectable, any man who believes he can brutalize his fellow man just because he is stronger or tougher is definitely a dangerous individual!

WILD BILL CURRY presents a different kind of danger because he is perhaps the sanest of all the 10 subjects. Curry is an intelligent individual who, according to other wrestlers, knows as much or more about scientific wrestling as anybody.

He could have been, and indeed, he was, at one time, a clean wrestler. But because of his size (he's one of the smaller wrestling stars), he found he was not advancing in his chosen profession. He then made a conscious decision that the only way for him to reach stardom would be for him to become a wildman.

It has worked perfectly. He has attacked fans and has been hauled away from arenas in police cars on more than one occasion. He has put dozens of wrestlers into hospital with brutal tactics, but unlike other dangerous men, Curry knows exactly what he is doing at all times. In other words, he has begun to thoroughly enjoy his role as a dangerous maniac and purposely continues to live up to it.

Because of his complex about his size (being a small man in essentially a big man's sport), he compensates for it by violent behavior. He is so used to it by now that he has turned into quite a violent person. But unlike some of the other subjects, he can control his violence, which is proven by the fact he has raised a fine, well-balanced son (Fred).

Wild Bill Curry is a dangerous maniac—*especially* because he is 100 percent sane and quite intelligent.

IVAN KOLOFF is a robot. He has been programmed a certain way and it is unlikely he will ever change.

Koloff is by far the most intelli-



Bull Curry (inset) is taken away in a police car (above) after starting a riot in Montreal. "Curry is 100% sane," Dr. Wilson says, "and knows what he's doing at all times."



Ivan Koloff (above) tries to tear open Kenny Jay's face (left) in a match in Minneapolis. According to Dr. Wilson, "Koloff is a robot who has been programmed and cannot change." Dr. Wilson also contends that Ivan really hates wrestling because it keeps him away from his native country.

gent of the subjects. Given the proper circumstances he could have become a college professor, a scientist, or a great political leader.

But as a child in his native Russia it was ordained for him to be a wrestler. Since the age of six, everything he has done has been with one goal in mind—to make him the best professional wrestler in the world.

As an amateur he was unbeatable. Enormously strong, quick, agile, and very smart, if you had a computer design the perfect wrestler you would wind up with someone very similar to Koloff.

But somewhere, something went

wrong. It was probably when he was ordered to leave his native country and wrestle in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe. He wasn't asked. He was told. He became just another Russian export, like caviar.

Koloff loved Russia and didn't want to leave. But in Russia, when the government orders you to do something—you do it. And he has been taking that decision out on opponents ever since.

Koloff is dangerous for one reason only. He hates wrestling. Wrestling is the reason he became an "export" ... a showcase for the Soviet style



Cowboy Frankie Laine is unconscious but that doesn't stop Killer Kowalski from continuing to punish him. Dr. Wilson considers the Killer a "psychiatrist's dream" since he is a perfect example of a "split personality." Killer's dangerous only when he's wrestling.



Ciclon Negro airplane spins Dory Funk Sr. before viciously slamming him to the canvas. Negro "lives for violence and blood," says Dr. Wilson, "and he doesn't know the difference between winning and losing." Negro has no fear of pain or injury.

of life. Were he not programmed to be a wrestler he might today be in his beloved homeland which he gets to visit perhaps only once a year.

Unfortunately for Ivan, the fear of the government is so strong he dares not say "I've had it." His life has been laid out for him. He has no other choice. As a result, he takes out his hostility on other wrestlers and anyone connected with the sport.

Ironically, what he doesn't realize, is that his fantastic ability combined with his ruthlessness makes him a superstar which results in his having to remain here as an example of Soviet training. Had he been a dismal

failure, he undoubtedly would have been called back to the Soviet Union long ago and might by now be happily driving a tractor in the Ukraine!

KILLER KOWALSKI is a psychiatrist's dream—the foremost example of the split personality. Never have I met a man in whom the split personality runs along such textbook lines.

Outside the ring, Kowalski is a mild-mannered, soft-spoken individual with the gentleness of your neighborhood minister. He does not drink or smoke, takes excellent care of his body, and is the kind of

man mothers might point to and say "I hope my son grows up to be just like him." He is pleasant, refined and good company.

But once he puts on a pair of trunks Kowalski turns into a ruthless, sadistic individual who delights in torturing his opponents. He'll stop at nothing, as that famous incident when he actually tore off an opponent's (Yukon Eric) ear indicates.

As I said earlier, Kowalski is almost a perfect textbook case. The reason for his split personality dates back to his very first match when he was thrown in against an experienced and particularly brutal veteran. He absorbed a horrible beating.

And although he was wrestling clean at that time, he vowed that never again would someone do to him what had been done in that first match. In effect, every time Killer wrestles, he seems himself wrestling that very same opponent who hurt him so badly. He has no conception of whom his opponent for a particular evening might be. To him, they are all one man—that wrestler who nearly murdered him in his first match and almost ended his career before it began.

Kowalski is dangerous. Make no mistake about that. But he's dangerous only when wrestling. Most fans, however, believe that's enough!

CICLON NEGRO lives for violence. He lives for blood. He lives for gore. Negro needs violence like a junkie needs a fix. He's an extremely unbalanced individual.

Negro does not know the difference between winning and losing and he doesn't care. He lives for violence and blood—and it doesn't make the slightest difference whether it's his opponent's blood or his own.

Whereas most wrestlers use destruction as a means to an end (this doesn't necessarily mean winning because many wrestlers consider themselves winners regardless of the official decision), to Negro, violence and destruction are the ends in themselves. He does not care how badly he may get torn up or beaten—as long as his opponent has been torn up and beaten as well.

Although it is impossible to say for sure, Negro might be a masochist—one of those people who love pain and self-destruction. If so, he is only part masochist, because he equally

Continued

loves giving pain to others.

Because he doesn't care about the traditional concepts of winning and losing, Negro is extremely dangerous to other wrestlers. Whereas they might worry about being disqualified or even about being less physically damaged than their opponent, Negro worries about neither. He has absolutely no fear and, what's worse, he seems to have no instinct for self-preservation. He does not try to protect himself from injury and will gladly take a horrible battering just to inflict a similar battering on an opponent.

To Negro, violence is a religion. A man like that presents a danger to opponents, fans, friends, and especially to himself.

THE SHEIK is the most interesting of all the men in this article and quite possibly the most dangerous. He would make a better subject for a book than for a part of an article.

Basically, The Sheik is dangerous because he is a man from a totally alien civilization. If a Martian visited Earth he would probably have as much—maybe more—in common with this planet's inhabitants as The Sheik has with the people of North America.

His values are totally different, and whereas he is an insane maniac by our standards, he is a well-balanced and highly-respected professional athlete by the standards of his own people.

The main thing to remember about The Sheik—and this is what makes him so dangerous—is that *there is no right or wrong where he comes from!*

That's a concept extremely difficult for Americans and Europeans to understand. But where The Sheik grew up the only law was that the strong survived and you took what you wanted if you could get away with it. There were no rules governing behavior.

That's why he's disqualified so often. The concept of a winner and loser *within the rules* is totally alien to him. To him the winner is whoever lives or survives or causes the most damage to an opponent.

And when you combine that with an ability to hypnotize himself into being impervious to pain or to giving him the strength of 100 men—you can realize what a dangerous man he is!

He lives by his own rules. And those rules say there's nothing wrong

The Sheik rips apart Shoehi Baba's face (right) as the referee tries to pull him off. Dr. Wilson says The Sheik "is a man from a totally alien civilization."



Ray Stevens and Crusher (above) try to tear each other's face apart in a locker room brawl. "Ray Stevens," according to the doctor, "is no more than a cold-blooded assassin who has no feelings and will do anything as long as he gets paid."

with blinding a man by shooting fire into his eyes or tearing his face open with your teeth.

By our standards, The Sheik is sick. But The Sheik doesn't live by our standards.

RAY STEVENS once said "I'd beat up my own mother if she stepped into the ring with me."

And he would.

Ray is uniquely a product of America. The desire to be on top burns brighter in him than in any other man in wrestling today. He is fond of quoting Vince Lombardi, former coach of the Green Bay Packers, who said "Winning isn't everything—it's the *only* thing!"

That's Ray Stevens' philosophy.

He'll do anything to win because

"America loves winners and not losers" and "winners make money—losers make friends." The desire to win burns so strong in Ray he doesn't care in the least how he goes about it. If he has to maim somebody—that's fine with him. If he doesn't have to—that's fine too.

Unlike many other of the 10 most dangerous wrestlers, Ray has no mental hangups. He can best be compared to a hired professional killer who goes out and does his job purely for money, not even knowing the identity of the man he's just murdered. He has no emotion. No feeling.

Ray gets paid to destroy his opponents and he does it. He holds no personal grudges against them. To him they're all the same. Obstacles.

Stevens grew up in terrible poverty



Mad Dog Vachon (left) attacks Yvon Robert Jr. with the metal attachment of the ring rope. Dr. Wilson says Vachon has an inferiority complex caused by jealousy and hate.



Valentine (right) finishes Johnny Rougeau off with an atomic skull-crusher. Dr. Wilson compares the blond to a "werewolf during a full moon" if he doesn't get what he wants exactly when he wants it.



in Brooklyn, N.Y. and never really had a dime until he began wrestling. Wrestling has given him everything. Coming from that kind of background, it's not expected he would chance losing money by sticking to the rules.

Stevens is dangerous because he has no feelings. He does a job. The better he does it the better he's paid. And that makes him nothing more than a cold-blooded, assassin!

MAD DOG VACHON is driven, almost to the brink of insanity, by jealousy. And he takes this jealousy out every time he puts on a pair of tights.

Vachon is reacting to the problems of being the middle child and second son. As the first born son,

older brother Butcher received everything. Mad Dog always got Butcher's hand-me-downs. And when younger sister Vivian came along, she became the apple of everyone's eye. Mad Dog was sort of left to fend for himself.

Mad Dog was always being ignored. His sister had the beauty and his older brother had the fame. That left him nothing. To compensate for that he had to make a name for himself and at the same time lash out at his sister and brother.

Every time Mad Dog Vachon sinks his teeth into an opponent's head or tries to break his leg, he's really saying "Look at me. Look at what I can do. I'm important too."

Basically, Vachon has an inferiority complex, nothing unusual con-

sidering the circumstances of his upbringing. Every minute of every day he is trying to prove to himself he's as good as everyone else and he has chosen, as his method, being more violent than anyone else.

Just as Ray Stevens will go to any lengths for money, Vachon will go to any lengths for recognition. The worst thing that could ever happen to him would be for him to be ignored. To make sure he never is, he has turned into a vicious maniac. He doesn't care if he's loved or hated. The important thing is that he's not ignored.

JOHNNY VALENTINE is quite similar to Killer Kowalski, although his split personality isn't as clearly defined as Killer's.

Valentine has basically a child-like outlook on life. When he gets what he wants he's a sweet, friendly individual who would give you the shirt off his back. If he doesn't have things exactly his way or if you cross him in the slightest manner—he becomes like a werewolf during a full moon.

He can be warm and charming one moment. He can tear you from limb to limb the next.

Valentine doesn't enjoy being a vicious and violent person. In fact, many times he's tried to be just the opposite, turning over a new leaf. He knows his violent, ruthless tactics are wrong and he tries to prevent using them.

But when things don't go his way he has no other way to handle the situation other than to lash out as hard as he can. He forgets his good intentions and turns into a raging maniac bent on destruction. Many times he has seen pictures of opponents he has maimed and has said "Did I do that?"

Two distinct personalities live in Johnny Valentine's body. One is the real Johnny, the other the Johnny who comes out when he's angry. This accounts for the reason some fans swear he's a sweet, warm, wonderful person, while others swear he's a cold-blooded madman. It's as if the two personalities are waging a war within his mind and when he thinks about it the good one comes out, but when he's angry the other one takes over.

And when that other one takes over, Johnny Valentine can be one of the most dangerous men in the whole world. □

Everyone wondered how Dory Funk Jr. would react after losing the world championship he held for more than four years. If anything, Dory's more determined than ever!



King Curtis (above) is a bloody mess. He's just been beaten to a pulp by the man he considered "a bum," Dory Funk Jr. Curtis is hiding a wooden crate (right) behind the announcer's table as he verbally battles with the former champion.

IS DORY FUNK JR. WASHED UP?

Exclusive Photos
By Bill Beach



NO SLEEP. NO sleep at all. Dory Funk Jr. tossed and turned all night. A few hours ago he lost the National Wrestling Alliance heavyweight title to Harley Race. The thoughts that were keeping him awake were "Am I washed up? Did I defend the title before my shoulder injury healed properly? Will I ever be able to wrestle again?"

At daybreak Dory left his lonely Kansas City hotel room. He was heading back home. Back to Texas. Back to all the hometown fans who probably hadn't yet heard that he lost the belt last night.

In the hotel lobby fans waited for wrestlers to come down from their rooms enroute to wherever they were going, to sign autographs.

"Hey, look," one fan screamed. "It's Dory Funk Jr.!"

"Aw," another one shrugged. "I don't want his autograph. He's a loser. Let's hang around. Race

should be coming down soon."

Dory overheard this. He dropped his head low and started walking out through the revolving doors. As he looked back, there was Race, coming out of the elevator. The fans mobbed him. He obliged and signed autographs.

Dory hailed a taxi. He got one immediately. While the driver was taking him to the airport, he kept glancing at Dory in the rear view mirror.

"What'cha staring at," Dory asked.

"Aren't you Dory Funk Jr.?" the driver questioned.

Dory nodded yes.

"I saw that match last night," he said. "Man, you took some hell of a whipping. Are you gonna quit?"

"I don't know," Dory answered.

"Hey, I don't feel much like talking. Just get me to the airport."

"Okay buddy," the driver

shrugged.

That drive really upset Dory. He thought about it all the way from Kansas City until he landed in Texas. There, waiting at the airport, was his brother, Terry. They shook hands, got into Terry's car and darted off to Terry's home. There they relaxed in the living room and openly discussed the previous night's events.

"Look," Terry pointed out. "Every champion has to lose the title sooner or later."

"Yeah," Dory said, "but why to Race. I've beaten the man before. I just didn't have what it takes. I've lost something."

"Dory," Terry said, "you've got a mental hangup about the shoulder injury. You're too worried about it goin' bad on you again. Stop this worrying business and get back to work. You're in as good shape as you ever were. You can beat Race or anyone else if you try." (Continued on

page 64)

HELL NO! JUST ASK KING CURTIS!



Left: Curtis goes beserk and chases Dory all around the studio with the wooden crate. Above: After he catches up with him, Curtis viciously smashes the crate over Dory's head 10 times!

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THE BEST OF THE WRESTLER

(Continued from Page 6)



NOVEMBER 1973



MAY 1974

wrote, changed his style to become a fan favorite.

September 1973 featured one of the best wrestling stories ever published: "How I Won The Title From Dory Jr. by Harley Race." It's an exclusive article written especially for *The Wrestler* by former NWA champion Race.

The very next issue of *The Wrestler*—October 1973—brought another very popular story. "Is Dory Jr. Washed up?—Hell No! Just Ask King Curtis!" both asks and answers a very important question.

Remember the hot feud between Billy Robinson and Superstar Billy



JUNE 1974



DECEMBER 1974

Graham? Well, it reached the boiling point in November 1973 and we were right on the scene. "How Superstar Billy Graham Outsmarted Billy Robinson" provided fans with the accurate, up-to-the-minute coverage for which *The Wrestler* is so justly famous.

"It's Dangerous To Be Friends With Victor Rivera" concerns the unfortunate Raul Reyes, who was unlucky enough to get caught up in the blazing Rivera-John Tolos feud. This great action story was published in our May 1974 issue.

World famous grappler Antonio Inoki was featured in the June 1974 *The Wrestler*. "Now Japan Owns The NWF Title" details how Inoki defeated Johnny Powers for the important NWF championship.

The Sheik is probably the most hated grappler in wrestling history. "Why The Sheik Spared Bobo Brazil From Flaming Agony" proves the despised Arab has shown an opponent mercy—if only once. This shocking story was a feature in the December 1974 issue of *The Wrestler*.

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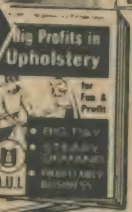
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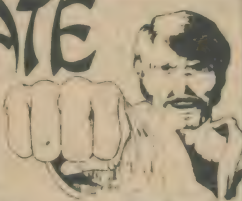
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SHEIK SPARED

(Continued from Page 13)



The Sheik's dangerously expert fingers clamp down on Bobo's neck, closing off the windpipe. Bobo is actually more worried that at this close range The Sheik will hurl fire in his unprotected face. Yet, for some reason, The Sheik is content simply to choke Brazil.

Sheik revealed he still retained his fire-throwing ability. He left the arena a very puzzled man.

"I've been wondering all night," Bobo said early the next morning, "and your guess is as good as mine. Maybe he can't throw it all the time. Maybe that crazy guy just didn't feel like throwing it when he wrestled me. Last night proved he's just as effective as ever with those flames.

"Sheik's burned me before. I can only assume he'll try to burn me again. Probably the only person who knows why he didn't throw fire that night is The Sheik himself."

Sheik is notorious for speaking to no one but his managers, the only

men he trusts. Trying to speak to him is a waste of time. The only person who can tell what goes on in Sheik's mind and is willing to talk to anyone is his manager, Eddie Creatchman.

"It's not too hard to understand," Eddie says. "The Sheik was trying to get the referee to stop Brazil from using the foreign object. Brazil tried to say the object was Sheik's but that's ridiculous. So this poor wrestler, who asked only to have the match on a scientific basis, was helpless as Brazil repeatedly stabbed him. He implored the referee to stop the butcher but it was in vain.

"Does anyone ask why Brazil was not punished for using a foreign



object? No! All they ask is why didn't Sheik throw fire. He should have—to protect himself from that animal's attack. Personally, I wish he had. Then Brazil would have been taught a lesson and I wouldn't have to answer these dumb questions!

"He was too busy trying to get the referee's attention and didn't have a chance to throw fire. That's all there is to it."

The Sheik has never bothered with the referee before. Why did he do it this time?

"He wanted to try something new!" Creatchman snapped. "How the hell do I know the reason?"

Creatchman is obviously just as confused as everyone else.

A few days later, Bobo called and was very excited. He realized there was one reason everyone had overlooked.

(Continued on page 54)

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



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SHEIK SPARED

(Continued from Page 53)



"This may sound strange," Bobo admitted, "especially when you apply it to Sheik. But I think he didn't throw fire because of his

pride!"

Bobo realized he had some explaining to do and continued. "Sheik is always being accused of



Opposite page, left: Brazil is brutally using Sheik's weapon on its owner. Above: Brazil refuses to let Sheik escape the torture and flee the arena.

throwing fire because he can't take it. He's afraid to absorb what he dishes out. If he had thrown fire at me, everyone would have called him a coward again.

"So for once he decided to take it. I was using his foreign object and doing tactics usually done by him. This time, he took it. He proved to the world he can take anything dished out by anybody.

"I doubt if he'll continue to prove his point though. He did it once and I'm sure he didn't like it. But that was one match where I really think we saw The Sheik's pride. I know how badly, I was hurting him. That man has a lot of pride."

There are many theories but only one real answer. And the only person who knows the answer is The Sheik. It's doubtful he'll ever tell. □

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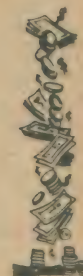
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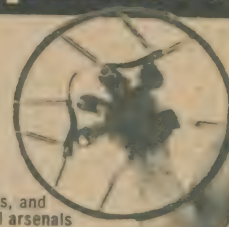
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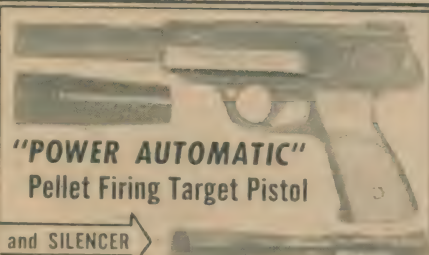
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HOTSEAT

(Continued from page 23)

a championship can't keep it by getting himself disqualified.

Q: You're kidding. Why would you want that? The way you wrestle, if you ever won a championship you could hold it forever.

A: Listen, man, don't get hostile with me. I can dig what you're

throwing out and that don't go with me. Sure, I get disqualified once in awhile. That's 'cause the referees have it in for me. But I'm talking about guys like Funk who purposely get themselves disqualified so they'll keep their titles. I don't dig that,



Ernie (left) is willing to go into any kind of match—a cage match, a brass knucks match, or a chain match. Below: Ernie tries to tear a hole in Ruben Juarez' throat. He says that referees have it in for him because of his reputation.



man.

Q: How do the referees have it in for you?

A: I've got a reputation as a mean man, you dig? They look for reasons to disqualify me. Some cat with a reputation as a "good guy" like Morales or Mascaras, man, they do the same things I do but they get away with it. You ever watch Morales during a match? I mean *really* watch him? He's always walking around with a clenched fist. You think he's ever stopped?

Q: That bring us to another question. Do you consider yourself a "dirty wrestler?"

A: No way, man. I'm a rough wrestler. Cat can't take punishment has got no business being in there with The King. But I'm not dirty. I don't have to be. I'm too good.

Q: We know. You've told us that a number of times.

A: Just laying on a little truth, baby.

Q: But if you're really that good how come you have to brag about it? Shouldn't your actions speak for themselves?

A: They do... but sometimes you gotta remind the peasants, you dig?

Q: Okay. Let's wrap this up. One last question. Outside of yourself, naturally, who do you consider the roughest wrestler around?

A: That's a tough one. Ain't none of 'em really rough for me. I'd say maybe The Sheik because he's a mental case and you never know what he's liable to do. I don't know if he's *rough*, but I'd say he's the most dangerous. I can't really think of anybody who's in the same class as me.

Q: Okay. I'd like to thank you for allowing us to put you on the "Hotseat." Not everybody we've asked has had guts enough to do it.

A: It's like I've been saying all along, man. I'm The King. I've got nothing to hide, nothing to be afraid of. I tell it straight up. Cat who won't tell it straight up is a cat that got somethin' to hide. The King's got nothing to hide.

Q: I still think you brag too much.

A: Just laying on a little truth, man, that's all.

Afraid of Baldness? You don't HAVE to lose your hair.

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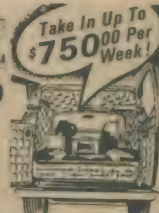
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GRAHAM

(Continued from Page 33)

Billy Robinson's confusion has turned to anger as he realizes he has been tricked by Graham.



The whole match came to a head when Robinson regained his cool and hip-rolled Graham all over the place. Graham managed to scoot away from the Englishman momentarily. When Robinson went to pick up the attack, Superstar got down on his knees and begged for mercy. What he was really doing though, was gaining time—time to catch his breath. Robinson didn't know it but he was wasting precious time. Now that Graham was rested, his tricky brain would be able to function at its slyest again.

Billy seemed to "let" Robinson continue a hip-rolling attack. Finally, when they were close to the ropes, Robinson hip-rolled Graham low, toward the apron. But the cagey Graham upped his body and went flying over the top rope! The bell rang. "What's going on?" Robinson asked the referee.

The ringside officials have disqualified you," the referee said. "You threw Graham over the top rope. That's illegal."

"No!" Billy screamed. "Graham went over on his own accord. You've got to believe me! You've got to!"

"The decision is final," the referee stressed. "Head to the shower, Robinson!"

Graham stood at ringside, pointing at Robinson and laughing hysterically.

"You're a sore loser!" he yelled. "Watsamata? The great Billy Robinson a crybaby? Ha!"

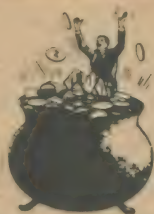
Robinson jumped over the top rope and went after Graham. He chased him all over the arena but was unable to catch him. Graham finally made it to the dressing room. The chase was over.

Billy Robinson sat on a chair in his dressing room, the picture of disgust.

"I don't know what to say," the dejected Robinson shrugged. "All these years shot to hell because of a stupid trick! I should have been more careful."

That's all Robinson had to say. He left the arena a different man from the one who came to defeat Graham.

Not to knock Graham, but Verne Gagne is sleeping a lot better tonight.



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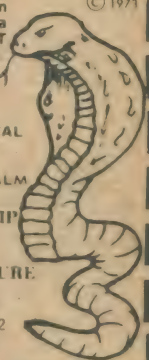
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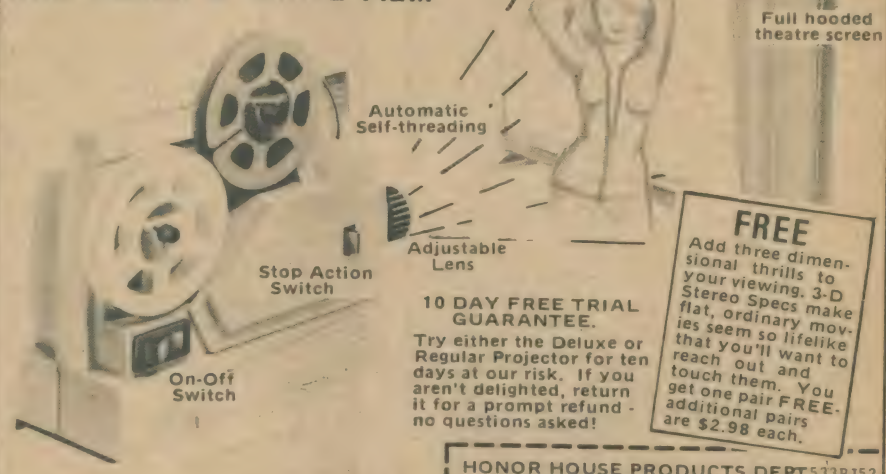
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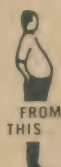
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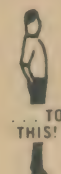
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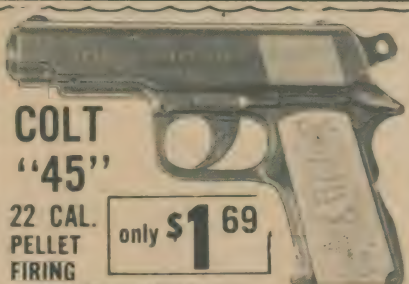
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WHEN PEDRO MORALES VOWED TO QUIT WRESTLING!

(Continued from Page 41)

A jubilant Morales stands on the ropes and revels in the plaudits of the fans after defeating Toru Tanaka. "As you can imagine," said Pedro, "I was more thrilled than usual after I won this match."

Kroll groped his way toward the side of the ring and instructed the time-keeper to ring the bell. "This match is over," Kroll told him tears coming down his eyes. "Tanaka is disqualified!"

Tanaka went wild and continued battling after the bell rang. He didn't stop until Pedro dropkicked him clear out of the ring. But he didn't run to the locker room. He ran right into McMahon's office demanding a rematch. "I want to lodge an official protest!" he roared. "The referee can't disqualify me. I didn't do anything to Morales."

McMahon, as the rules of the W.W.W.F. state, submitted the protest. But he knew that even if it were allowed—and there wasn't much chance of that—he'd write a special clause into the rematch contract stating that Tanaka could not take the title back to Japan.

But Tanaka outsmarted the wily promoter and demanded in his protest that should a rematch be granted—it be granted as if the first one had never taken place and that the contracts signed for the first match be recognized for this one. A few days later, McMahon got the following telegram:

"After reviewing the factors involved in the official protest application lodged by Mr. Toru Tanaka, the W.W.W.F. has ruled to uphold the protest since Mr. Tanaka did not physically cause any harm to his opponent that should have resulted in his disqualification. Another match shall be granted and the contractual agreements from the first match shall prevail."

So McMahon was right back where he started from. Again Morales would have to defeat Tanaka to prevent the belt from being taken back



to Japan.

In the second match, Morales was prepared for Tanaka's salty tricks. As the professor was throwing salt to the four corners of the ring, Morales rushed him and knocked the salt out of his hands. The champion dazzled the challenger with a series of flying dropkicks and whips into the ropes. After about five minutes, during which the champ never looked better, Pedro dropkicked Tanaka to the mat, climbed up on the top rope and flattened him with a Mil Mascaras-type flying body press. This time there was nothing Tanaka could protest about.

Pedro stood in the ring, after the match ended, holding, as he usually does, the Puerto Rican and American flags. But as the more than 20,000 fans cheered wildly, only a handful of people knew how close they came to seeing Pedro holding those flags for the last time.

And downstairs in his office, promoter Vince McMahon breathed a big sigh of relief! □

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HARLEY RACE

(Continued from Page 31)



The victim of my spine crusher, Dory amazes me with his stamina (above) when he gets up after it and comes back for more. I gave him a flying arm flip (right) and that really stunned him.



and finally blasted him with the suplex slam. But he got away. I really didn't get the leverage I wanted on that suplex, but it was still good enough to put away most wrestlers.

Just before the bell Bruno caught me in another bearhug, but I knew the time limit was nearly out. So I just made up my mind to hang on, not to concede and finally that gong rang. A draw is as good as a win and Sammartino had failed—he didn't beat me.

So in a space of two weeks I defeated the N.W.A. world champion and the man who held the W.W.W.F. belt for eight years! And I did it as I always do it—with clean, scientific wrestling.

I hope you people out there realize the extent of these triumphs. Funk was a champion for more than three years defeating every top contender in the world except one—Harley Race. Sammartino is a living legend, considered by many to be the greatest

grappler in history. He could not take the title from Harley Race.

So now I have that treasured gold belt, symbolic of the best in wrestling. I believe I can hang on to it for a long, long time. There aren't many wrestlers who can take my suplex, and I don't limit myself to just that move. I can use the diving head butt, the atomic knee drop, the backbreaker and any number of basic cradle holds to get a pin. Just like in my relaxation hours, I'm varied and can use different things just as I can enjoy different activities.

I remember when other wrestlers



As you can see Funk tries to drape his leg over the bottom rope (above) to prevent being pinned during the first fall. But I had him down with so much power he couldn't budge. The belt's being awarded to me (below) and Dory (behind referee's arm) hasn't yet realized what's happened. He's still dazed from the suplex. Dory was a good sport and congratulated me later on.



refused to help me as a young guy coming up in wrestling. I remember how jealous they all were of my good looks. I remember how scared they were that I'd take some money out of their pockets by beating them in the ring.

I remember how only Buddy Austin, Ray Gordon and Buddy Rogers would give me any help. I remember all the torturous hours in the gym, getting my arms and legs twisted.

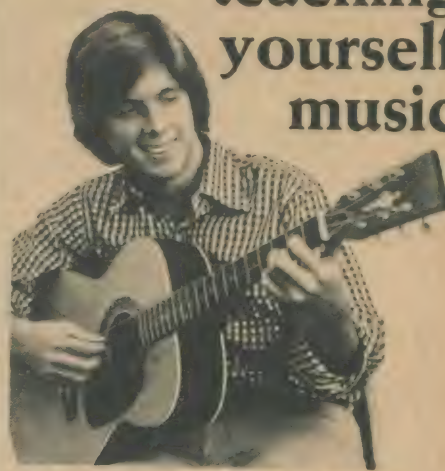
I remember how some promoters want to call me "Mad Dog" Race. That's silly. I'm rough but that's the way wrestling is today. I wrestle the

way I have to in order to win. Promoters and fans should be honest and call me by my right nickname, "Handsome Harley."

And, on top of it all, I remember that fan in St. Louis who said I'd never make it. When I think of all these people who jeered me, who said I couldn't do it, who tried to hinder my development, I am more determined than ever to hold this crown until the very day I retire.

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THIS SPACE CONTRIBUTED BY THE PUBLISHER

DORY FUNK JR.

(Continued from Page 49)



"I don't know," Dory shrugged. "I've got to do some soul searching."

Dory left Terry and went back to his house. There he spent another sleepless night.

Early the next morning he received a telephone call from Amarillo's promoter.

"Dory," he said. "I want to see you in my office this afternoon. It's a matter of uppermost importance."

"Okay," Dory said. "I'll be in around two o'clock."

Dory was right on time.

"Sit down," he told Dory as he puffed away on a cigar. "Look, I know you lost the belt and I realize you're upset," he explained "But the fans here refuse to believe you're washed up. They want to see you. If you're wary about wrestling how about making an appearance. Maybe do some training exercises in the ring on our TV matches. Show 'em you care."

Dory didn't even hesitate to answer.

"Okay," he agreed. "But no matches. I don't know if I'll wrestle again."

A handshake sealed the deal. Tomorrow night Dory would be seen by all his fans on TV.

Before Dory's exercise segment, he stood around the studio greeting his well wishers. He also sat with them for awhile and watched the matches. One of them changed the night's events.

King Curtis, the mad Hawaiian, was making mincemeat out of an opponent. Towards the end of the match he ran out of the ring, headed for the refreshment stand, grabbed

After getting the crate away from Curtis (above) Dory flips the mad Hawaiian. But Curtis finds his weapon again (below) and repeatedly smashes Dory.



a wooden soda crate, and beat his opponent until he was a bloody mess!

"Hey, stop that!" Funk yelled to Curtis!

"Shut up punk!" Curtis yelled back.

An argument broke out between Dory and Curtis. Meanwhile, Curtis' opponent was carried out on a stretcher. Dory carried his battle over to the TV announcer.

"What's the matter with him?" Funk questioned, pointing to Curtis in the ring. Then, with the crate still in his possession, Curtis joined Funk and the announcer. He shoved the

announcer out of the way, grabbed the microphone and yelled, "Kill the old champ! Kill him dead!"

Next he threw the crate at Dory! Funk ducked and ran. He headed into the ring. Curtis was right behind him with the crate! A referee ran in to assist Dory.

"I don't need any help! Dory yelled.

Just then, Curtis grabbed him by the hair, kicked him low, and clobbered him with the crate—10 times! Dory was on the verge of blacking out.

Just then Dory shocked everyone. When it looked like he'd had it, he punched Curtis in the stomach, making him drop the crate. Then he gave the Hawaiian a taste of his own medicine. He bashed Curtis' forehead until he was a bloody mess!

Dory threw the crate outside the ring and began wrestling.

He bombarded Curtis with flying dropkicks, headscissors' and leglocks. Then he applied his famous "spinning toehold!"

"No more!" Curtis screamed. "No more!"

The fans rose to their feet in unison. They jumped up and down with joy. Their hero defeated the previously undefeated Hawaiian madman.

Curtis ran from the ring, bloody. He grabbed the announcer's microphone and yelled, "Him cheat! Funk a bum!" Then he threw the microphone down and proceeded to try to wreck the entire ringside area.

Dory ran to the area Curtis was wrecking, smashed him with a chair, and sent him reeling back to the showers.

The fans gave Dory a standing ovation as he climbed back into the ring.

"Aren't you going to raise my arm in victory," he asked the referee.

"Hell no," the official answered. "This match wasn't scheduled. You won unofficially."

"You mean this won't go into the record books?" he asked.

"No sir," he was assured.

Dory put his hands on his waist, shook his head disgustedly and left the ring amid thunderous applause. Although he didn't win anything officially he did win something.

"I won back my confidence," he winked. "Dory Funk Jr.'s not washed up—he's just starting fresh all over again."

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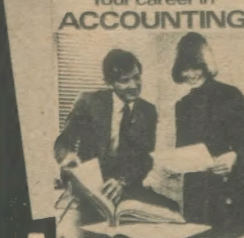
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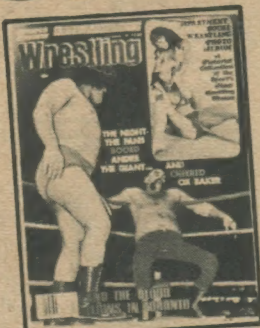
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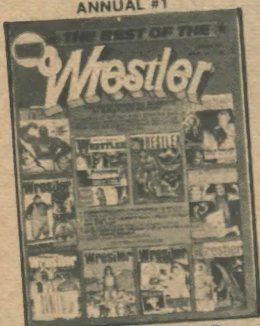
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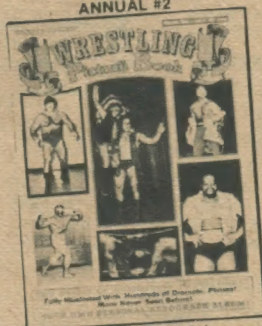
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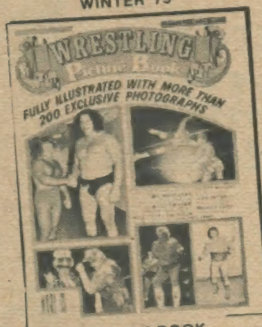
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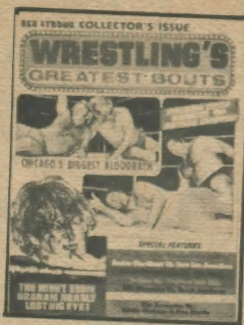
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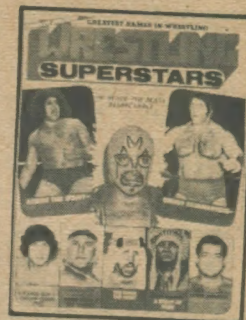
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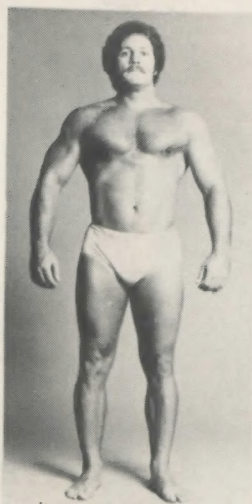
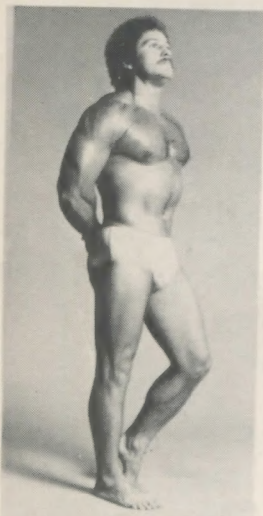
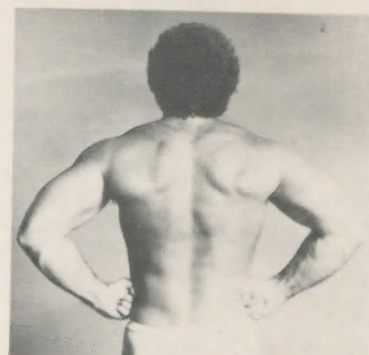
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